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CURZON: THE LAST PHASE

1919-1925

A Study in Post-War Diplomacy

by

HAROLD NICOLSON

πόθεν ἅμα πρᾶον καὶ μεγαλόθυμον
ἦθος εὑρήσομεν; ἐναντία γάρ
που θυμοειδεῖ πρᾳεῖα φύσις.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

In the 'Literary Testament' which Lord Curzon dictated a few hours before his death he expressed a wish that the fullest publicity should be given to his tenure of the Foreign Office. 'As to my work', he said, 'as Foreign Secretary from 1918 to 1924—a period of unparalleled difficulty in international affairs and of great personal worry and sometimes tribulation . . . —I court the fullest publicity as to my conduct in those anxious years and can imagine no better justification than the publication of any or all the telegrams, despatches, minutes and records of interviews for which I was responsible.'

In the very same document he added the opinion that it was undesirable to publish posthumous papers which, written as they might have been in the 'temper and mood' of the moment, might reflect small credit upon their authors or recipients.

I have endeavoured in this volume to fulfill each of these behests. I have not, I think, quoted any papers which, if not already published, would be liable to cause offence.

I have endeavoured, wherever desirable, to provide references in the form of footnotes, to the authorities quoted in the text.

My unacknowledged sources fall within the following categories: (1) Lord Ronaldshay's official biography of Lord Curzon, my indebtedness to which has been too frequent to permit of incidental acknowledgment. (2) Parliamentary papers, blue books and published *procès verbaux*. (3) Lord Curzon's own private

papers, which Lady Curzon has kindly allowed me to consult. (4) Information derived from Lord Curzon's friends and collaborators. It would be invidious, and perhaps indiscreet, to express to individuals my indebtedness under this heading. (5) My own memory, as fortified by diaries and papers.

I have not, to my knowledge, reproduced any hitherto unpublished document or letter without obtaining the necessary permission.

To my son, Benedict Nicolson, I am indebted for much careful work upon the maps.

H. N.

February 1934

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Chapter I

ARMISTICE

November 11, 1918

The Allied victory—Effect of this on Curzon's faith and temperament—Curzon as aristocrat and bourgeois—Examination of influence of his childhood and earlier life—His late Victorian attitude of mind—His spinal illness and resultant spiritual rigidity—Nature of his imperialism—Absorbed at Eton—Its emotional and subjective aspects—Its more serious aspects, 'responsibility', 'duty', 'sacrifice'—As exemplified during his Viceroyalty—Curzon's temperament—His gifts—His deficient sense of proportion—Light this throws upon his inconsistencies—His competitive and controversial instincts—His inability to delegate work or disregard detail—His unwillingness to resign—Causes of this—Humiliation of his position as Foreign Secretary—The War and his position in the War Cabinet—His fears and ambitions.

I

THE House of Lords assembled on the afternoon of Monday, November 18, 1918.

The purpose of their meeting was to celebrate the victory of the Allied Powers and to congratulate the Crown upon the surrender of the German Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Bulgaria.

Lord Curzon, as spokesman of the second Coalition Government, moved the address.

'My Lords', he said, 'I now rise to make the second motion that stands in my name upon the paper. It runs as follows:

> 'That a humble address be presented to His Majesty to congratulate His Majesty on the conclusion of an Armistice and on the prospects of a victorious peace.'

'My Lords, the curtain is fast descending upon one of the most stupendous dramas in history. The Armistice is not only the precursor, but it is the sure guarantee, of peace. Though some months may elapse before the stage is cleared of the débris that encumber it . . . yet peace is in no danger whatsoever. The armies have already won peace: it will remain for the statesmen to see that it is honourable and lasting.

'The British flag has never flown over a more powerful or a more united empire . . . . Never did our voice count for more in the councils of nations; or in determining the future destinies of mankind.'

Curzon had always possessed a sense of occasion. On that November afternoon, in the twilight of the Upper Chamber, he spoke with dignity rather than with triumph; in gratitude and not in ostentation. His voice was modulated to the tone of sombre thanksgiving; those fibres of scorn or arrogance, which so often vibrated with aggressive discord through his classic oratory, were softened to the chords of an almost religious emotion, dropping at moments to a sacerdotal hush; even his accent, that eccentric amalgam of Derbyshire and Eton, became less specialised; nor was the attention of his audience distracted by that querulous stressing of final consonants, those hissing sibilants, those precise complaining dentals. He allowed himself no gestures; his square white hands remained clasping the silk lapels of his coat; his shoulders, wide and rigid above the steel casing which supported his afflicted spine, pivoted in stiff solemnity to right and left. The drama of the occasion was too stupendous for even his powers of self-drama-

tisation. And as he drew to the end of his speech he raised his Roman face aloft and intoned with ample fervour the first strophe of the Hellas chorus :

> The world's great age begins anew,
> The golden years return,
> The earth doth like a snake renew
> Her winter weeds outworn :
> Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,
> Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

On that 18th of November the dream (and not to Lord Curzon alone) seemed a reality. Now that it has dissolved we are able—with painfully acquired knowledge—to examine the wrecks.

2

It must be admitted that in those concluding weeks of 1918 the British Empire had cause for confidence. The alliances with France, Belgium and Italy, the association with the United States, were still unbroken. The German fleet and armies were no longer a menace ; already, and without opposition, the Allied forces had consolidated their bridge-heads across the Rhine. The Austro-Hungarian Empire had split into its component parts, and all that remained of that once formidable factor were two small republics : isolated, famished and disarmed. Bulgaria was no more than a corridor for the passage of our troops. The Ottoman Empire lay at our feet dismembered and impotent, its capital and Caliph at the mercy of our guns. The command of the seas was ours in undisputed possession ; the German colonies had been occupied ; all vital communications, all strategical points, were under our control. The allied reserves of man-power and munitions were unlimited ; against our defeated and by then non-

existent enemies the Coalition could, within a few weeks, have placed seventeen million armed men into the field. The Bolshevik experiment in Russia seemed on the verge of collapse. Triumphant in Europe and in Africa, we held the keys of Asia in our grasp. No victory has ever been so wide, so overwhelming, so unquestioned. We possessed physical supremacy such as had never been known since the days of Hadrian or Alexander. We seemed the masters of the world.

There was one thing, however, which the Allied democracies, and especially the British Empire, did not possess. They did not possess an enlightened or continuous will for power. It was not many weeks before this lack of unity, determination and enlightenment became apparent.

Upon Lord Curzon our chaotic victory produced a dual effect. He responded to it in terms of his imperial faith. The God of Battles had once again selected the British Empire as the instrument of Divine Will. He responded to it in terms of his temperament. Fate, which had been so cruel to him, had at last relented, had at last accorded to him a renewed personal opportunity. Here in truth was the culmination and guerdon of all his industry and service. His countrymen had at last recognised his ability and merits. In modest thankfulness, but not without self-confidence, he accepted his tremendous task.

Yet, in this also, the high hopes of the beginning were gradually clouded by disillusion, mortification and defeat.

The four years of Lord Curzon's tenure of the Foreign Office will long remain a problem for the political theorist. Here was a man possessed of great

intelligence, of flaming energy, of clear ideals, of unequalled knowledge, of wide experience: to this man was granted an opportunity such as falls seldom to any modern statesman; and yet, although in almost every event his judgment was correct and his vision enlightened, British policy under his guidance declined from the very summit of authority to a level of impotence such as, since the Restoration, it has seldom reached.

Several explanations of this tragic phenomenon can be advanced. It can be contended, for instance, that Lord Curzon was not (in fact, as distinct from appearance) granted any opportunity; that throughout the first four years of his period in office the control of foreign policy was vested in the hands of the Prime Minister; and that the responsibility for failure must rest, not with Lord Curzon, but with Mr. Lloyd George. As proof of this contention it could be shown that when, on the fall of the Coalition Government, Lord Curzon did in fact obtain the comparatively undisturbed direction of foreign policy, our influence, our authority and our international credit immediately revived.

It can be argued, again, that the failure of our post-war diplomacy was due, not to the errors or policies of individual statesmen, but to a general collapse in the national will, coinciding with a sudden strengthening of will-power in those countries with whom we had more specifically to deal.

The more general theory might be advanced that the post-war period was one of transition from aristocratic to democratic diplomacy, and that this transitional phase brought out the vices of both systems and the virtues of neither.

And the personal explanation might be given that Lord Curzon's failure to impose his judgment upon the Government which he served was due to some defect in his own temperament, to some flaw in the magnificent machinery of his character and mind.

Each of these four explanations contains an element of truth. The political theorist may, however, hesitate to accept any one of them as an absolute answer to the problem. He may prefer to conclude that the chaos and complexity of the post-war period was beyond the capacity of any single human brain either to conceive or to control. He may come to believe that mistakes, humiliations and surprises would have occurred, whoever had been in charge of British policy. And he may thus decide to confine his examination, not to the problem of why things happened but to the problem of why they happened in that peculiar way.

To approach the problem from such an angle necessitates a previous comprehension of Curzon's character, of his faith and temperament. In the succeeding chapters of this study the several diplomatic events will be examined as they occurred. In the present introductory chapter it will be useful to examine, in terms of Curzon's personality, the psychological factors behind these events.

3

Among the innumerable documents which Lord Curzon left behind him after his death is a single sheet of notepaper bearing the superscription of No. 10 Downing Street. It may be supposed that, in the course of some dull session of the Cabinet, he had drawn towards him this particular sheet of notepaper and had

amused himself—half in a mood of irony and half in a mood of self-appraisement—by sketching upon its grey surface two designs for his own epitaph. The first of these drafts, which he thereafter deleted with an impatient pen, runs as follows : ' A faithful servant of the Empire, he explored the secrets, and loved the peoples, of the East. A ruler of his country in the Great War, he strove to add honour to an ancient name'.

The second of the two drafts is more elaborately composed :

> ' In diverse offices and in many lands
> as explorer, writer, administrator,
> and ruler of men,
> he sought to serve his country,
> and add honour to an ancient name.'

It was in such terms that Curzon, at the end of his career, defined himself. No definition could be more just or comprehensive.

Curzon, predominantly, was an administrator. He was not a politician. The tragedy of his life was that he imagined that a man could attain the highest office in the State by the sheer worth of industry, integrity, intelligence and efficient public service. It was only in the last months of his life that this illusion was finally dispelled. He then learnt that no man in modern England can become a great statesman unless for many years he serves as politician. That service was the only one which Curzon had been unable to perform.

He took no vivid interest in domestic politics, he possessed but small aptitude for party manœuvre, he found it difficult to co-operate with ministerial colleagues whose irresponsibility shocked him and whose ignorance filled him with dismay. His prolonged ab-

sence from political life had prevented him from becoming a figure familiar to the electorate, and had robbed him of that affection which the British public bestow upon parliamentary leaders, whom they have liked, or disliked, over a period of many years. Nor was he able, as others have been able, to conceal his own outstanding gifts behind a mask of human mediocrity; to the average man Curzon seemed above the average—as someone, therefore, to be derided and condemned. Nor did he ever succeed in obtaining the whole-hearted support either of the popular, or even of the responsible, press. Although he would treat ordinary journalists with cheerful courtesy, he was never able to regard a press magnate as different in kind from other equally successful financiers. Hampered as he was by these disabilities he could never, in any circumstances, have become a popular figure: and his public manner (so different from his charm and geniality in private life) created the legend of a man, conceited, reactionary, unbending and aloof.

It is thus natural that attempts should have been made to explain the complexities of Curzon's character and conduct by regarding him as a survival from the eighteenth century, as an anachronism ill-adapted to the changed proportions of the modern world.[1] Externally there was much to support this thesis. His enamelled appearance, his statuesque presence, the alternation of his manner between lavish exuberance and icy reserve, his passion for the architectural in life and in behaviour, his frequently salacious humour, his

[1] Lord D'Abernon, in his brilliant analysis of Lord Curzon's personality which figures in pp. 48 ff. of vol. i of *An Ambassador of Peace*, writes as follows: 'He was born and died in the faith of an aristocrat of the English eighteenth century'.

predilection for the less standardised forms of personal comfort, his abiding love of the rotund and balanced phrase, his frequent tears, the very quality of his classicism—all these suggested and confirmed the portrait of an English nobleman of 1779. Yet beneath this opulent exterior were other strains, deeper, less complacent and more essential. The pride of ancestry, the outspread magnificence of Kedleston, were counterbalanced for him by memories of ascetic penury in childhood and early life; of the petty brutalities of his governess, Miss Paraman; of the stark discipline imposed upon a clergyman's family in the later 'sixties. It is often forgotten that Curzon was nurtured in what, essentially, was a mid-Victorian vicarage: its floors may well have been of *opus alexandrinum* and its columns of alabaster; yet Kedleston was none the less a vicarage; there was more than a breath of Calvinism in the air; and Curzon's childhood was thus disciplined, narrowed, intimidated, uncomforted and cold.

Curzon would always describe himself in after life as a 'self-made man'. This was no extravagant paradox. His father, Lord Scarsdale, did nothing whatsoever to encourage his son's ability, and would in fact deride the efforts of George Curzon to achieve distinction at Eton and at Balliol. The allowance accorded him was meagre in the extreme; it was by his own journalistic efforts that he supplemented that allowance in order to defray the cost of his candidature for Parliament and his subsequent journeys.[1] Nor was Curzon's pride in

[1] Mr. Francis Curzon, Lord Curzon's brother, points out that these references to Lord Scarsdale are exaggerated and unfair. In 1910 he made over to Lord Curzon one half of his estate with the income attached to it. He was a reserved man and not given to lavish encouragement. But from the earliest days he took great delight in his son's achievements.

his ancient lineage by any means as arrogant as is often supposed. 'My ancestors', he would say, 'were a feeble lot. No family could have remained in possession of the same estate since the twelfth century had they manifested the very slightest energy or courage.' The desire to rescue that family from centennial mediocrity was no small part of his ambition.

To regard Curzon solely as a belated aristocrat is thus to misunderstand both Curzon and aristocracy. He possessed many patrician qualities and some patrician defects. Yet he was also a late Victorian of the upper middle class. Dimly he was aware of this, and many of his attitudes—his proud aloofness for instance—can be recognised as a subconscious effort at concealment. There were important elements in Curzon which had been formed by the individualistic striving, the competitive energy, those processes of self-identification and self-delusion which characterised the English bourgeoisie in the later stages of the Industrial Revolution. He could not always avail himself of the detachment, the adjustability, the unworldliness, the absence of class-consciousness, the unassuming dignity of the complete aristocrat.

Nor was this all. At the age of sixteen he lost his mother. At the age of nineteen, between leaving Eton and going up to Balliol, he developed curvature of the spine. Too little has been made of the disadvantages entailed upon him in later life by this affliction. There can be no doubt whatever that the spinal weakness which first manifested itself in 1877 had a marked effect upon his character and upon the quality of his mind. Not only did it produce the familiar defence-apparatus of the sufferer from spinal disease—rendering him

irritable, lonely and self-assertive—but it induced a spiritual as well as a physical rigidity.[1] There is a noticeable difference between the gay and friendly Curzon of the Eton period, high-spirited and brilliant, and the self-assertive young man who, in October 1878, appeared at Balliol. 'A popular boy', pronounced the Rev. Wolley Dod, his tutor at Eton. 'He was not popular in college', writes Professor Mackail of the Oxford period, 'nor did he want to be.' His spinal illness did more however than diminish his gift for un-selfconscious companionship; it induced a marked rigidity on his philosophy of life. Most of Curzon's basic convictions, the articles of his faith, were absorbed before he left Eton in 1878; very few of the convictions which he acquired in later life became basic, or even central, to his personality.

The imperialism of Lord Curzon can thus be accurately appreciated only if it be referred to two curious influences of his childhood and adolescence. The first influence is that of the self-righteous materialism of the Victorian bourgeoisie. The second is the intellectual rigidity induced very early in his life owing to spinal illness. The latter influence, since it affected the quality of his imperialism, can be examined in greater detail.

4

In his last year at Eton George Curzon became secretary of the Literary Society. In this capacity he

[1] 'My reputation', he said to Lord Riddell in 1923, 'is due in some measure to the fact that for many years I have been braced up with a girdle to protect my weak back. This gives me a rigid appearance which furnishes point to the reputation for pomposity.' (Lord Riddell's *Intimate Diary*, p. 411.)

displayed self-confidence in inviting the more eminent of his contemporaries to deliver an address. He failed with Tennyson; he succeeded with Gladstone. Yet of all these invitations the most significant, from the point of view of his own development, was that tendered to, and accepted by, Sir James Stephen—author of *The Story of Nuncomar and Sir Elijah Impey*, and the successor of Macaulay as the Justinian of India. Sir James Stephen, on that occasion, made a remark which permanently affected the then secretary of the Literary Society. 'There is', he said, 'in the Asian Continent an empire more populous, more amazing, and more beneficent than that of Rome. The rulers of that great dominion are drawn from the men of our own people.' This sentence, the actual words employed, produced upon George Curzon an apocalyptic effect. 'Asia', 'Continent', 'Empire', 'amazing', 'beneficent', 'Rome', 'rulers', 'dominion', 'men', 'our own people',—such were the watchwords which thereafter guided his life. 'Ever since that day', he confessed in 1896, 'the fascination and *sacredness* of India have grown upon me.'

It would be possible to analyse the constituents of Curzon's imperialism under headings represented by the several substantives and adjectives employed, that evening at Eton, by Sir James Stephen. There is 'Roman' in the first place. Abundantly did Curzon feel that England was Rome's inheritor, tempering dominion with sanitation, dominance by public works. Among the qualities which he most consistently admired and practised was the old Roman quality of *gravitas*, that seriousness which comes from a profound consciousness of world-responsibility. The fact that

Mr. Lloyd George was devoid of any form of *gravitas* was perhaps the root cause of their eventual misunderstanding. To Curzon this very *gravitas* seemed the most central and necessary of all imperial virtues. He thus came to think, and indeed to move, in Roman terms. The very cast of his own features became, as the years advanced, increasingly pro-consular, and his whole attitude towards alien civilisations was the '*excudent alii*' of an exclusive, although humane, nationalism. Pride, or even race-arrogance, was another constituent. 'No Englishman', he wrote at the age of twenty-eight, 'can land at Hong Kong without feeling a thrill of pride for his nationality. Here is the furthermost link in the chain of fortresses which, from Spain to China, girdles half the globe.' 'The sight', he wrote at the same date, 'of the successive metropolises of England and the British Empire in foreign parts is one of the proudest experiences of travel.' Imperialism, again, called forth the peculiar virility of the English race—that tempered instinct for governance which was nurtured, among the upper classes, in our public schools. While still at Oxford he had scorned 'the sordid doctrine of self-effacement'. Not only was imperialism the complete expression of the English system, it was also inevitable. 'It is becoming', he exclaimed in 1898, 'every day less and less the creed of a party and more and more the faith of a nation.'

The emotional side of his nature (and Curzon was at heart a sentimentalist) derived rich sustenance from the romance of empire building. The wail of a marine bugle in some Mediterranean port, a Sikh sentry saluting the flag at Kalati Ghilzai, a corporal in the Army Service Corps unloading medicaments at Bush-

ire, a pinnace under the white ensign jugging up the Yangtze, a detachment of the Camel Corps at Abu Hamed, the white ducks of the Port Officer at St. Helena—each of these evoked in him an up-rush of emotion, and left with him a sense of race-superiority, of race-achievement, of individual justification.

Such were the weaker, the more subjective, aspects of Curzon's imperialism. It contained other elements which were more objective, more serious and more profound. One finds in his speeches a recurrent contrast between those who regarded the Empire 'as an irksome burden' and those for whom it was 'the most majestic of all responsibilities'. This sense of 'responsibility', with its associated virtues of duty, sacrifice and justice, dominated his conscience. He believed profoundly that God had selected the British Empire as an instrument of Divine purpose. The admonition of Anchises echoed eternally in his ears. So long ago as 1893 he had assured his constituents that Great Britain would be judged by posterity, not according to her domestic achievements, but according to the impress she would leave upon 'the peoples, the religions and the morals of the world'. This responsibility had 'for some peculiar and inscrutable reason' been entrusted to her by the Almighty. His *Problems of the Far East* was dedicated 'To those who believe that the British Empire is, under Providence, the greatest instrument for good that the world has ever seen'. 'If', he said in the last year of his viceroyalty, 'I felt that we were not working here for the good of India in obedience to a higher law and a nobler aim, then I would see the link that holds England and India together severed without a sigh.'

The mission thus vouchsafed to us imposed the obligations of self-sacrifice and virtue. To him India was 'the highest touch-stone of national duty'. Ever present to his mind was 'that supreme idea without which Imperialism is only a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, namely the sense of sacrifice and the idea of duty'. As mandatory of a Divine Will the British administrator must be unremitting in the exercise of the highest ideals of justice and efficiency. 'I do not know', he wrote to the Secretary of State in connexion with some case of ill-treatment of native Indians, 'what you think of these cases. They eat into my very soul.' 'One thing', he wrote to Alfred Lyttelton, 'I will and do make a stand for here, and that is righteousness of administration. It is not that I have turned Pharisee or that my spirits have gone sour. But the English people, and still more the English rulers, are here for an example.' And as a final expression of his faith, as the most simple and therefore the most eloquent of all his credos, there is his speech to the Byculla Club at Bombay, delivered at the very moment when he was leaving India—an injured and embittered man:

> 'A hundred times in India have I said to myself—"Oh, that to every Englishman in this country, as he ends his work, might be truthfully applied the phrase 'Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity'". No man has, I believe, served India faithfully of whom that could not be said. All other triumphs are tinsel and sham. Perhaps there are few of us who make anything but a poor approximation to that ideal. But let it be our ideal all the same—to fight for the right, to abhor the imperfect, the unjust or the mean, to swerve neither to the right hand nor to the left, to care nothing for flattery or

applause or odium or abuse, never to let your enthusiasm be soured or your courage grow dim—but to remember that the Almighty has placed your hands to the greatest of His ploughs, in whose furrow the nations of the future are germinating and taking shape, to drive the blade a little further in your time, and to feel that somewhere among these millions you have left a little justice or happiness or prosperity, a sense of manliness or moral dignity, a spring of patriotism, a dawn of intellectual enlightenment, or a stirring of duty where it did not exist before. That is enough. That is the Englishman's justification in India. It is good enough for his watchword while he is here; for his epitaph when he is gone.

'I have worked for no other aim. Let India be my judge.'

How could so religious an imperialist hope to understand democracy, or to be understood by Demos?

5

Curzon's imperialism—that very core of his philosophy and faith—was thus an inspiration more serious, more virile, more superstitious, and less cynical than any territorial acquisitiveness, than any racial self-satisfaction, or than any purely vulgar enjoyment of dominion, ostentation and opulence. It was founded, not so much on mystic determinism as upon a more precise, if less defensible, belief that God had personally selected the British upper classes as an instrument of the Divine Will. It was interpreted in terms of unsparing self-sacrifice, of a religious ideal of duty, of integrity and service, of a not ungenerous pride, of a breathless devotion to the efficient conduct of all public business.

These were high virtues. Had Curzon been able to

subordinate to such virtues the egoistic impulses of his impatient temperament he would to-day be venerated as among the noblest of anachronisms. He was seldom able to achieve that subordination. At the end of his career, when the cup of supreme power was dashed at the culminating second from his lips, this boyhood ideal of self-sacrifice emerged again to fortify his dignity and courage. Yet during the breathless, and not uncomplaining, combat of his public life he was all too apt to allow his temperament to intrude upon his faith, to allow the personal, the competitive and the immediate, to dim the more selfless standards by which he was, and will be, justified. If, therefore, we are to estimate the effect upon Curzon of the victory of 1918 —if we are to trace from that point the phases through which he passed as victory slid rapidly towards confusion and defeat—it is necessary to analyse not only the constituents of his faith and his imperialism, but also the mixed strands of his temperament and personality.

Curzon was from the outset equipped with many supreme abilities. He possessed a superb memory, an unequalled power of assimilation, great intellectual curiosity, a genius for lucid exposition, abundant humour, and oratorical capacity of a high order. His will-power, though intermittent, was often tense; his energy superhuman; his industry redoubtable. Yet the gods, in assigning to him these advantages, imposed their penalty.

'He shall', they decreed, 'have no acute sense of proportion.'

'There shall', they also decreed, 'be gaps in his strength.'

Lord Curzon's detractors (and they are many) have had much to say regarding his moral and intellectual limitations. They have been apt to attribute the former to egoism, and the latter to rigidity of mind. Yet neither the combative individualism of Curzon, nor yet his mental inelasticity, proved such constant impediments to his success as did his defective sense of proportion, his faulty instinct for real values. He has been accused of possessing a 'one-track mind', of being deficient in creative, as opposed to emotional, imagination. 'Lord Curzon', wrote Sir Valentine Chirol, 'seldom if ever shows himself possessed of the spiritual vision which is of the essence of real statesmanship.' Mr. Hugh Spender, again, draws attention to his 'curious inability to look ahead and measure all the consequences of his actions'.[1] Even at Balliol he was suspected of 'superficiality of heart and mind'. He has been accused, again, of sacrificing principle to expediency. Even Lord Ronaldshay discovers, after 1905, 'a plane of lowered vitality', a 'new-found pliancy'. It has been pointed out[2] that, in his dispute with Kitchener and the India Office he compromised upon the question of principle—for which he would have had strong support both in India and at home—and resigned six months later on what appeared to be a purely personal issue. Yet in this Indian battle it was Curzon and not Kitchener who was in the end shown to be right. A similar subordination of proclaimed principles to the emotions of the moment is cited against him in connexion with such issues as House of Lords Reform, Woman's Suffrage, the Montagu-

[1] Hugh Spender, *Fortnightly Review*, March 1, 1924.

[2] Sir Valentine Chirol, *Fifty Years of a Changing World*, pp. 228 ff.

Chelmsford report, the Anatolian policy of Mr. Lloyd George, and the Egyptian question. It must be admitted that Lord Curzon, in his political convictions, was egocentric and on occasions opportunist. Yet it was his constant rigidity in small matters which rendered so very startling his occasional pliancy in more vital issues. This rigidity was a very obvious element in his temperament and manner. 'It was', writes Lord Ronaldsay, 'with the utmost difficulty that he subordinated his views to those of other people.' He was apt, also, to ascribe to problems on which he was himself an expert (such as Asia) an importance infinitely greater than that possessed by other problems (such as economics) in which, to say the least, his knowledge was shared by others. This personal angle of approach had other disadvantages. Lord Curzon possessed a highly developed competitive, or even combative, instinct. He was, as Mr. J. D. Gregory has remarked, 'a controversialist first and foremost'.[1] Never did his energy become more dynamic than when it was seasoned by the competitive; never did his collector's instinct respond so readily as when some other collector was in the field; never did his enjoyment of foreign travel become so acute as when it enabled him to correct 'the imperfect information or the erroneous hypotheses of previous travellers'.[2] These defects have often been exaggerated; yet they existed. They were occasioned, not so much by inordinate conceit or egoism, still less by any lack of human benevolence, but rather by his inveterate inability to assess essential

[1] J. D. Gregory, *On the Edge of Diplomacy*, p. 251, a work which also contains (pp. 245 ff.) a very vivid and accurate account of Lord Curzon's manner towards, and relations with, his official subordinates.

[2] Lord Curzon, *The Pamirs and the Source of the Oxus*.

values, or to distinguish what was necessary and important from what was neither.

This deficient sense of proportion, while it pervaded and explains wide areas of his character, was demonstrated in its most palpable form in his inability to delegate to others those subsidiary functions which, although he performed them with unsurpassed efficiency, were unworthy of his personal attention. He was himself pathetically conscious, and indeed rather proud, of this disability. He called it 'my middle class method'; he called it 'my remorseless scrutiny'. Yet it is a fact, and no legend, that at the height of some international crisis he would sit up to the early hours of the morning carefully adding up his domestic accounts, or writing indignant memoranda on the incidence of cost in the matter of that coal-shed at Hackwood. Instances of this temperamental defect will be cited in the pages that follow. For the moment, it is important to suggest that Curzon's misunderstanding of post-war developments was due not so much to any ingrained patrician prejudices as to his middle-class inability to assess proportions. It was this slight, this irritating, this almost ridiculous, flaw in the majestic machinery of his equipment which induced those vast turbines to shake thunderously at trivial moments; and at moments of crisis to pause and clog.

6

It would be possible to advance (and to confirm by evidence) the thesis that Curzon's imperialism was in 1918 a fairer, more scientific, more moderate, more liberal, less selfish and far less adventurous theory than were those of other, seemingly less anachronistic,

politicians. It was based on knowledge, experience, precautions. It was based, above everything, upon the doctrine of 'responsibility', upon the conviction that Great Britain had been entrusted with certain moral and practical obligations towards her subject races. This ideal of 'responsibility' has, in recent years, been vulgarised by those parliamentarians who have seen in it not so much a spur to administrative achievement as a formula wherewith to parry obstruction in the House of Commons. It may be that, even as an ideal, it is not immediately applicable to modern conditions. Yet to men like Curzon, who *knew* that in the application of this ideal they and their fellows had found and communicated virtue, it was anything but a verbal expedient; it was not even a justification; it was a high and constant source of energy. To question this ideal, and still more to discredit it by insincere use, appeared to them not merely an abandonment of race-character and responsibility, but to imply a danger 'even more soul-destroying'. To the older Imperialist the glory of Empire had been purchased by self-sacrifice, integrity and effort. In democratic imperialism they recognised a tendency to retain the former and to evade the latter; a tendency 'to shirk the responsibilities of Empire and at the same time to take the profits'.[1] This tendency filled them with shame and dismay; yet when they tried to correct it they found arrayed against them the combined forces of national exhaustion and party misrepresentation.

It would have been possible, as has been said, to interpret Lord Curzon's foreign policy in terms of a

[1] Lord Lloyd, *Egypt since Cromer*, vol. i, p. 359.

courageous, if losing, battle on behalf of his imperialist ideals and faith. Such an interpretation, although defensible, would not be wholly accurate. True it is, that his action and advice proceeded in almost every case from this central focus. Yet the main riddle of Curzon's five years at the Foreign Office is not so much his action as his inaction; not so much the advice which he tendered as the frequency with which he allowed that advice to be disregarded. His biographer has, again and again, to meet the question why, in face of so many disavowals, he did not resign. To a certain extent, and especially in his personal feelings, Curzon became a martyr to a cause which, at that time, appeared lost; but he was a martyr who refused, invariably, to go to the stake.

In the pages that follow there will be many occasions on which the reader will pause and ask the following question. 'Yes', he will say, 'I admit that Curzon was a gifted man, and I now see that he had qualities of heart and mind which I had not previously suspected. I recognise that his difficulties, personal and other, were insuperable. Yet had he been a supremely great man he would either have triumphed over these difficulties or else have refused to remain technically responsible for the disasters they provoked. Why, at this stage, did Curzon hesitate to resign?'

It may be useful, in this introductory chapter, to anticipate that inevitable question, rather than to interrupt the subsequent narrative by explanations and excuses. For in the answer to such a question can be included much that illumines the more obscure corners of Curzon's ambition, credulity and self-distrust.

Enough has been said regarding his temperament to

suggest some, at least, of the causes of these ultimate hesitations. His egocentric method of approach, his deficient sense of proportion, did in fact lead him to underestimate the value of problems in which he was not himself an expert, with which he was in no sense personally identified, or against which his only weapon was that double-bladed dagger of resignation. Asia was his speciality, and he inclined to regard all extra-Asian matters as questions well suited to the capacities of Mr. Lloyd George or Mr. Bonar Law. Moreover, had Lord Curzon insisted upon assuming directive control over British policy in Europe it is certain that he would have been replaced by a Foreign Secretary more amenable to the dictation of No. 10 Downing Street. He was himself acutely aware of such a possibility, and would often cite it as a complete justification of his unwillingness to resign. Nor was this merely a personal opinion. Those of his friends, such as Lord Crewe, Lord Salisbury and Lord D'Abernon, who foresaw the disasters which would result were Mr. Lloyd George to obtain an absolutely autocratic control of foreign policy, never ceased to urge upon Curzon that it was his patriotic duty to submit to any humiliation rather than to abandon his post at a moment of such danger. 'It is a great joy to me', wrote Lord Allenby, 'and to all of us here that you are still at the F.O. With you in charge we have little to fear; but with a new man, lacking in knowledge or tact, there would be great danger.' Such letters were frequent and insistent. All that was finest in him responded to these appeals; it would thus be unfair as well as inaccurate to represent him as clinging to office merely from selfish motives.

It must be remembered also that for all his indignation at being so flagrantly subordinated to the Prime Minister's Secretariat, Lord Curzon did not realise, nor even feel, the humiliation of his position as deeply as observers (who were not acquainted with his habits of self-justification) were at moments led to suppose. The falsity of his position was not, in fact, so galling to him as it would have been to some other Foreign Secretary possessed of equal pride and a more accurate sense of proportion. Nor should it be forgotten that Mr. Lloyd George, when other people were not present, was invariably considerate. Mr. Bonar Law, for all his charming gentleness, was less tactful. Yet Mr. Bonar Law was tragically ill, pitifully unassuming; to him Curzon was in a position of residuary legatee. To Mr. Baldwin Curzon was Foreign Secretary for only seven unhappy months. His position, awkward as it often became, was not intolerable. It had many and frequent compensations. His disinclination to resign was moreover fortified not merely by a wish to spare his country the disadvantage of an even more subservient successor but by a very vivid realisation that, were he once to relax his grip on public office, there were many younger competitors who would see to it that he did not return. And in the last resort the word 'resignation' had for him associations of a deeply disagreeable character. It is necessary to examine these associations in the light of Curzon's career prior to 1919.

The life of George Nathaniel Curzon divides itself into the following nine periods:

(1) 1859-1878. Childhood and schooldays.
(2) 1878-1882. Balliol College, Oxford.

(3) 1882-1894. Travels in Asia.
(4) 1895-1898. Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office.
(5) 1898-1905. Viceroy of India.
(6) 1905-1915. Retirement from public life.
(7) May 1915–January 1919. Lord Privy Seal.
(8) January 1919–January 1924. Foreign Secretary.
(9) January 1924–March 1925. Disappointment and death.

It is with the eighth of these periods that the present study is mainly concerned. Lord Curzon's conduct of foreign policy was, however, permeated by his personality, and it has thus been necessary, in this introductory chapter, to analyse that personality in terms of his faith and temperament. In these concluding sections it remains to examine some of the influences which moulded that faith and temperament, and to record those events of his life which continued to affect his actions during the period more specifically under review.

The main influences in his childhood were, as has already been indicated, the following. There was the splendour of tradition and the romance of ancient lineage. As a contrast to these came the chill nurseries of Kedleston; the three brothers and six sisters; the Anglican services conducted by his unappreciative father in the neighbouring church; the 'paroxysms of ferocity' in which their governess, Miss Paraman, would frequently indulge. There was the insistence on obedience, success and the more detailed forms of religion and accountancy. Miss Paraman inculcated the belief that everything in life could be entered in an account book in terms of either debit or credit. This became for him a durably damaging belief. It was fortified by the meticulous

precision of his mother. There followed the preparatory school of the Rev. Cowley Poole at Wixenford, and the violent discipline of Mr. Archibald James Campbell Dunbar, who instilled into the then malleable George Curzon the pernicious theory that an accurate command of detail represented the highest achievement of human intelligence or character. Eton followed, and with it a burst of intoxicating success. Undisciplined (there are stories of Ascot races and covert bottles of Burgundy) but studious (seventeen prizes, select for the Newcastle, sent up for good no less than twenty-three times) George Curzon emerged from Eton with a brilliant reputation and a complete political philosophy. Then came the first two of a long series of disasters. His mother died in 1875. In 1877 he developed curvature of the spine.

The second, or Balliol, period opened in October of 1878 and closed in 1882. Here again there was triumphant precocity, yet already a slight cloud had gathered across the sun. The charm which at Eton had proved a mitigation of his egoism, became (and remained) a factor realised only by his more intimate friends. Already there was a touch of self-assertion, of irritability, of conceit. Yet in spite of all this he achieved a first in honour moderations, those elegant and respected rooms in the garden quadrangle, his dominance of the Canning Club, his Presidency of the Union. Jowett, it is true, would from time to time pipe little blackbird warnings. Spring Rice, Beeching, and the more flippant of his contemporaries would lampoon and ridicule; Cranbourne, Palmer, Brodrick and other of his equally earnest fellows would express

fears regarding his too-abundant facility, his ardent prolixity, his flaming self-display. Their fears were not unfounded. George Curzon, to his own amazement, obtained only a second in Greats. That was the third of his major disasters.

There followed a period of extensive travel from 1882 to 1894. It is true that in 1883 he was made a Fellow of All Souls, that in 1885 he became one of Lord Salisbury's private secretaries, that in 1886 he was elected to the House of Commons as member for Southport, and that in 1891 (at the age of only thirty-two) he reached ministerial rank as Under-Secretary at the India Office. Yet the dominant factors in this, his third period, were the extensive journeys which he undertook in Asia and other continents and the valuably portentous books which he published on his return. In 1882 he visited Constantinople, Palestine and Egypt. In 1885 he was in Tunis. In 1887–1888 he explored America, China and India. In the autumn of 1888 he undertook the arduous voyage to Samarcand and Central Asia. 1889 was the year of his historic journey in Persia. In 1892 he toured Japan, China, Cochin China and Siam. In 1894 he revisited India and was one of the few Europeans to push onwards into Afghanistan. It was during this third period that he acquired that expert knowledge which was to prove both a useful and a destructive element in his subsequent career.

The fourth period, from 1895 to 1898, was probably the happiest of his early life. In April of the former year he married Mary Leiter. In June he became Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs under Lord Salisbury. Curzon always possessed sociable instincts;

until then he had been far too impoverished to indulge those instincts; with the fortune which his wife brought him he was able to entertain lavishly in Carlton House Gardens and at the Priory, Reigate. His official functions were enthralling, but at moments irksome. He chafed under the vague if masterly inactivity of his chief. He was obliged, as spokesman of the Foreign Office in the House of Commons, to cope with the inconvenient Parliamentary questions on such subjects as Armenian atrocities, the Jameson raid, the Kruger telegram, Venezuela, Siam, Crete, Kiao Chau, and Wei-hai-wei. Although he always kept before himself the belief that he was destined for a successful House of Commons career—although his ambition to be Prime Minister was one that never left him—yet he grasped eagerly at the offer to succeed Lord Elgin as Viceroy of India. He landed at Bombay on December 30, 1898—Viceroy and Governor-General at the age of thirty-nine.

It is outside the radius of this book to appraise Lord Curzon's work in India. Lord Ronaldshay, in the second volume of his classic biography, has provided the final word. Nor is it necessary to enter into the rights and wrongs of the controversy with Lord Kitchener. All that need be said is that Curzon left India in November 1905, after seven years of devoted service, convinced that he had been tricked by the Home Government, betrayed by his closest friends, and treated by public opinion with the grossest ingratitude.

The ten years that followed were years of mortification and unhappiness. His wife died in July of

1906, and thereafter Curzon immured himself at Hackwood, wrapped in a leaden cope of misery, resentment and remorse. His nomination, in 1907, as Chancellor of Oxford University, his victory the next year over Mr. Lloyd George ('the little Welsh bruiser') in the election for the Rectorship of Glasgow, provided, not so much an afterglow of triumph as an opportunity for intensive labour. In 1909 he visited South Africa and St. Helena, and upon that voyage he composed his *Principles and Methods of University Reform*—that amazing masterpiece of assimilation and lucidity. He grasped with avidity the opportunities for organisation and study offered by such diverse openings as the Royal Geographical Society, the National Gallery, the National Service League, the Victoria Memorial Hall, and Tattershall. Only rarely did he intervene in politics. A fine speech on the Anglo-Russian Convention in February 1908, a less glorious intervention in the matter of House of Lords Reform in 1910, some activity in the anti-suffrage movement—these in fact constitute the sum of his political activities during this fallow and discontented period. A sense of ill-usage became his constant companion: it remained with him until his death; only rarely did he permit himself to give it public expression. He classed himself with Clive, Warren Hastings, Wellesley, Hastings and Canning—those other disregarded Viceroys who 'had met with obloquy and injustice and have had to wait for a belated, sometimes only posthumous, recognition of their service'.[1] Angered and resentful, he would weed the lawn at Hackwood, reflecting 'that the Indian satrap has in many cases found the Vice-

[1] Curzon, *British Government in India*, vol. ii, pp. 66, 67.

regal throne an altar of sacrifice quite as much as a seat of glory '.[1]

Then came the war. Curzon immediately offered his services to Mr. Asquith. They were refused. ' Pitiful ', he recorded, ' that at 39 one was thought fit to rule 300 millions of people, and at 55 is not wanted to do anything in an emergency in which our whole national existence is at stake '. He fell back upon the care of Belgian refugees, and for many weeks he entertained at Hackwood two splendid martyrs of that forgotten cause—the King and Queen of the Belgians. With the formation of the First Coalition Government in 1915 Curzon accepted the minor post of Lord Privy Seal. On the constitution of the War Cabinet in the autumn of that year he was excluded. Slowly, however, the clouds began to lift. His amazing powers of work, the vast range of his experience, the sheer force of his lucidity, overcame the prejudice felt against him in the Coalition Cabinet. He took a strong line against the evacuation of Gallipoli, and an even stronger line upon the need of a Compulsory Service Bill. He was put in charge of the Shipping Control Board, and of the Air Board. On January 2, 1917, he married Grace, daughter of J. Monroe Hinds, United States Minister in Brazil, and widow of Mr. Alfred Duggan. His personal life was no longer desolate. Thereafter, in the radiance of that graceful companionship, his triumphs were doubled and his defeats were halved. Gradually his position in the Government became more influential. In December of 1916, on the formation of the second Coalition Ministry, he was admitted to the War Cabinet. And in January 1919 he was

[1] Curzon, *British Government in India*, vol. ii, p. 252.



GRACE, MARCHIONESS CURZON OF KEDLESTON, D.B.E.
From the portrait by John Sargent in the Tate Gallery

asked, during Lord Balfour's absence on the Peace Delegation in Paris, to take charge of the Foreign Office. In October 1919, upon Lord Balfour's retirement, he became Minister for Foreign Affairs. The tide of ill-fortune seemed at last to have turned in his favour. Honours were heaped upon him. His boyhood's dream of being both Viceroy and Prime Minister no longer seemed fantastic. For the moment he had an opportunity such as no Foreign Minister had enjoyed since Castlereagh. No wonder that in thankfulness he should have felt that 'the world's great age begins anew'.

Yet always, even in his most triumphant moments, there hung across the sky a haze of memory. It was the memory of those ten years of mortification after his return from India. He had resigned. His resignation had been accepted with glee. It had required a European war to replace him in public life. He had learnt his lesson. A popular politician can resign and thereafter return to power in some new combination. For an unpopular figure there is no such return. And Curzon, although perplexed and hurt by his own unpopularity, had no illusions as to its extent or depth.

Chapter II

ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE

January 1919

Curzon's relations with his Cabinet colleagues—Especially with Balfour and Lloyd George—His prestige with the Carlton Club—Acting Foreign Secretary, January 1919*—His general conception of British foreign policy—His previous experience—His disagreement with Lord Salisbury's splendid isolation—The personal point of view and its effect upon his attitude to certain foreign countries—His diplomatic ideals—Curzon as standing halfway between the old and the new diplomacy—His disbelief in internationalism—Nature of his nationalism—His insistence on truth and precision—His general theory of British diplomacy—His arrival at the Foreign Office—The inkstand story and its relation to other Curzon legends—His inheritance of British diplomatic tradition—Nature of this tradition—The Three Principles—Their corollary—Credit and prestige—Their effect on diplomatic method—Mr. Lloyd George—His adherence to traditional principles and disregard of traditional method—His Secretariat—Resultant impression of duality—How far was Mr. Lloyd George guilty of unwarranted intervention in foreign affairs.*

I

CURZON, as has already been indicated, was not by nature an adaptable man. Even in small matters, subordination or surrender were for him a torture of the soul. True it is that during the ten dark years of his eclipse he learnt the lesson that in modern democracies a Cincinnatus lives but an hour or so in public memory. Yet he never learnt the other lesson of contemporary politics, namely that elasticity is the supreme advantage and that the most useful constituent of elasticity is imprecision. His competitors in public favour were careful, when stating any principle, to

leave wide open the door of dignified escape. Curzon was apt to slam these doors, and his escapes were often lacking in dignity. At the very first moment he would nail his flag to the pole; at the very last moment he would pull it down.

His colleagues in the second Coalition Cabinet were aware of this propensity. They supposed that Curzon would swallow anything rather than relinquish office, and they amused themselves on occasions by concocting unpalatable draughts for him to swallow. He was thus seldom able to establish with the more active of his fellow Ministers relations of affection or even trust. To a large extent this was due to the defects of his own temperament—to his competitive instinct as well as to his moods of contempt. Nor were his colleagues wholly free from blame. The younger among them, having been trained in the school of inspired improvisation, were irritated by his studious accuracies, his paedagogic precisions. Mr. Edwin Montagu,[1] for his part, regarded him as an obstructive survival from the Salisbury period. A. J. Balfour, who should have shared the traditions of that distant epoch, was seldom able to accord a wholly generous sympathy. Memories of George Curzon's early self-complacency, memories of Stanway and Crabbet, memories of the Durbar and the Kitchener controversy, mingling with his own inherent dislike of the self-

[1] Edwin Samuel Montagu, b. 1879; Under-Secretary for India, 1910-1914; Financial Secretary, Treasury, 1914-1915; Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster, 1915; Minister of Munitions, 1916; Secretary of State for India, 1917; joint author of Montagu-Chelmsford report of July 1918 and responsible for passage of Government of India Bill in December 1919; resigned March 1922; died 1924. An intelligent, strong-minded, Saturnian figure, with deep if gloomy convictions and simple tastes such as bird-watching and oppressed nationalities.

assertive, his scepticism regarding the authenticity of all his contemporaries, induced a tendency in A. J. Balfour to minimise Curzon's qualities while exaggerating his defects. Strangely enough it was with Mr. Lloyd George that Curzon, in the earlier stages, established relations which were comparatively sympathetic. His unstinted admiration for the Prime Minister's war services, his knowledge of what Lloyd George had meant for the Empire in the dark days of March 1918, the very diversity between them of outlook and tradition, combined to create in Curzon an attitude of bewildered, irritated, disapproving, amused, but fascinated admiration. Mr. Lloyd George for his part was aware of, and perhaps even overestimated, the influence which Curzon was still able to exercise upon the elder members of the Conservative party, even as he appreciated his value as a reputable and able exponent of Coalition policy. Many—and on occasions acid—were the controversies which arose between them. Yet the lubricant of Mr. Lloyd George's charm, coupled with the important consideration that there could never be a competition between them for the post of Prime Minister, at first deprived these controversies of that sharp note of personal rancour, which was apt to embitter disagreements with his other, and especially his Conservative, colleagues.

Reference has been made above to the prestige which Curzon enjoyed among the elder members of the Conservative party. That prestige had been diminished by his attitude during the House of Lords controversy of 1910. The Carlton Club had further been mystified and estranged by Curzon's equivocal surrender on the

suffrage question, and his attitude towards the Montagu-Chelmsford report. Nor were they convinced that his stand upon the Irish question would be as sturdy as some of them had hoped. The theory began to be advanced that Lord Curzon was not sufficiently uncompromising to please the diehards, whereas his whole tradition and manner were too unbending to reassure the more advanced. In 1919 this theory was little more than an impression: but it was an impression which gained adherents in the years that followed, and which, in May of 1923, contributed largely to the deepest, and the final, tragedy of his life.

For the moment, however, in that November of 1918, these clouds had not emerged above the horizon. The sun of opportunity blazed in a ringing sky. In January of 1919 Lloyd George and Balfour crossed to Paris. Curzon established himself in the Foreign Office as Acting Foreign Secretary with the implied promise that he would be confirmed in that appointment so soon as Balfour, at the conclusion of the peace negotiations, resigned. The second of his three major ambitions was about to be fulfilled.

2

This was not Curzon's first experience of the conduct of Foreign Affairs. In June of 1895 he had been appointed Parliamentary Under-Secretary to Lord Salisbury, and had held that appointment until December 1898 when he left as 'Lord Salisbury's very interesting experiment' for India. Under a Foreign Minister who is also a member of the House of Commons the post of Parliamentary Secretary was apt in those days to be a sinecure. To him fell the less interesting of Par-

liamentary Questions, and, in the Office itself, an agreeable room, an even more agreeable Private Secretary, and long hours of ease and dignity into which the files would sometimes percolate after they had been finally dealt with by the Departments and the Secretary of State. Otiose and fallacious was, in such circumstances, the position of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary. In the House he was regarded, by colleagues ignorant of the workings of official machinery, as possessed of inside knowledge and some powers of direction. In the Office he was tolerated and pitied as a man—possibly a coming man—who must, with tact but not without accuracy, be made aware both of the inferiority and the inconsequence of his position.

The fact, however, that Lord Salisbury was at the same time Prime Minister and a member of the Upper House, threw upon Curzon's shoulders (he was at the time only thirty-six years of age) a responsibility wider and more authentic than that which has fallen to the lot of his successors. His was not at that date a wholly enviable position. Lord Salisbury was apt to keep him uninformed of policy, and to conceal in shy and awkward mumblings the answers to the pointed requests for guidance which Curzon, insistent and zealous, was apt to make. Nor was he himself certain that he agreed with the splendid isolation of his chief. There were moments when the masterly inactivity of Lord Salisbury appeared to Curzon inactive rather than masterly. He disliked the policy of 'throwing bones to keep the various dogs quiet'. He would himself have preferred to be 'as strong in small things as in big'. That was a preference which (unfortunately) remained with him in after years.

His final impression of the Salisbury period is well summarised in a letter written to Lord Selborne from India. That letter is worth quoting in greater detail:

> 'I never spend five minutes in inquiring if we are unpopular. The answer is written in red ink on the map of the globe. Neither would I ever adopt Lord Salisbury's plan of throwing bones to keep the various dogs quiet. (Madagascar, Tunis, Heligoland, Samoa, Siam.) They devour your bone, and then turn round and snarl for more. No! I would count everywhere on the individual hostility of all the Great Powers, but would endeavour so to arrange that they were not *united* against me. And the first condition of success in such a policy is, in my opinion, the exact inverse of your present policy; for I would be as strong in small things as in big.'[1]

In this letter, written nineteen years before Curzon became himself responsible for the conduct of foreign policy, one can recognise those very misconceptions, those very limitations of understanding, which in the post-war period marred the full expression of his abilities and faith. There is his instinctive dislike and distrust of all foreign countries. There is the assumption that relations between the Powers are based upon territorial rather than upon social, economic or cultural factors.[2] There is his belief in the inevitability, in all human affairs, of competition, combativeness and hostility; and, as a corollary of this, his suspicion of all gestures of conciliation, his abiding

[1] Letter to Lord Selborne, April 9, 1900 (quoted in Ronaldshay, vol. i, p. 254).

[2] Note also the following passage from his Romanes lecture on *Frontiers* (1907): 'As a branch of the science of government frontier policy is of the first practical importance and has a more profound effect upon the peace and warfare of nations than any other factor, political or economic'.

hatred of '*le beau geste*'. There is his reliance upon 'strength' almost as an end in itself. And, above all, there is a striking revelation of his false sense of proportion—'I would be as strong in small things as in big.'

To these limitations must be added others. Reference has been made in the previous chapter to a tendency in Curzon to approach all public questions from a personal point of view, and attention was then drawn to the perhaps disproportionate significance which he was wont to attach to Asiatic as distinct from European problems. This point needs once more to be stressed in considering specifically his qualifications as Foreign Secretary.

'Parliament', he wrote in 1898, 'will have to know Asia almost as well as it knows Europe; and the time will come when Asiatic sympathies and knowledge will be, not the hobby of a few individuals, but the interest of the entire nation'. 'It is', he wrote again, 'the prestige and the wealth arising from her Asiatic position that are the foundation stones of the British Empire'.[1] It might be contended even, and without undue exaggeration, that his attitude towards individual European Powers was affected by petty details of personal experience. One would have supposed, for instance, that he would have felt himself in sympathy with the ordered lucidity of the French genius. In practice, however, this sympathy was blurred by memories of Fashoda, by memories of the Muscat incident of 1899, and even by his vivid recollection of the fussy incivilities to which he had himself been subjected by the French colonial officials in

[1] Curzon, *Great Britain in the Far East*, p. 419.

Cochin China. One would have supposed, again, that his classical training would have rendered him a philhellene, yet his bias against the Greeks arose, not so much from any pro-Turkish sympathy (for had not the Turkish customs at Galata seized his luggage in 1889?), as from the memory of the trouble he had been caused, when Under-Secretary, by the Cretan question in general and by Eleutherios Venizelos in particular. Nor did he ever forget that when visiting Greece in 1883 he had been treated as a mere adjunct to Edward Lyttelton, a nephew of Mr. Gladstone, and that his whole Aegean journey had passed 'under the umbrella', not of Eton and Balliol, but of the great Liberal Prime Minister.

Other instances could be cited indicating that his approach to external problems was frequently coloured by prejudices deriving from some unpleasant personal experience, often so trivial as to escape conscious notice. It is not to be supposed, however, that the shape, as distinct from the colour, of his conception of foreign policy was not moulded by more serious considerations. To a certain extent, his views of diplomacy were based upon the defects of his temperament: to a far larger extent they were founded upon the virtues of his faith. He possessed, in fact, a perfectly definite, perfectly consistent, perfectly intelligent, and wholly honourable code of diplomatic conduct. Nor was this code in any sense reactionary. The principles of British foreign policy which Curzon set before himself derived from all that was strongest in his faith and experience. They can be described as belonging neither to the new diplomacy nor yet to the old. They represent an intelligent attempt to com-

bine the merits of both schools of thought and practice, and, as such, they possess for us at the present moment—when both the old and the new diplomacy are equally discredited—an interest and importance far beyond their purely personal or temporary application. It is perhaps justifiable to examine his diplomatic theory in some detail.

3

There is a tendency to-day (and to some slight extent it is a healthy tendency) to react against the unctuous inertia, the flood-lit self-righteousness, the timid imprecisions, the appalling amateurishness of democratic diplomacy, in favour of the more efficient and professional methods of the old. We are, however, apt to forget that the phrase 'secret diplomacy' does in fact describe a very dangerous phase in the relations between sovereign states. We forget that a man such as Lord Lansdowne thought it perfectly fitting to attach to the published clauses of the Anglo-French agreement of 1904 certain secret clauses that were not published. We are apt to forget that a man possessed of Lord Grey's integrity saw nothing wrong either in concealing from the Cabinet the military 'conversations' between the French and British General Staffs, or in negotiating with Germany a secret treaty providing for the partition of the Portuguese Colonies. We are apt to forget that the exact terms and operation of the Franco-Russian Alliance, or the Triple Alliance, were unknown to the peoples whom these instruments committed either to a breach of honour or to war. And we are thus apt to forget that the very worst type of amateurishness is to be preferred to a professional-

ism which can pledge the lives and interests of men and women without their knowledge or consent.

Obviously the ideal to be achieved (and it will certainly be achieved) is to differentiate between policy and negotiation; is to combine, that is, the confidential and expert handling of negotiation, with the maximum democratic control of policy in the form of ratification. Let agreements be negotiated between technicians working in privacy: and let these agreements, once reduced to precise and detailed form, be submitted to the open comment, criticism, rejection or consent of the parliaments and peoples whose interests are affected.

It is necessary to record that Curzon—perhaps alone among his immediate contemporaries—had a clear appreciation of this ideal. He is generally represented as a man whose thoughts were as rigid as his appearance, and whose every idea was welded to the fine illusions of the nineteenth century. To a large extent, as has been admitted, this is a correct representation: yet as applying to his deeper political and imperial instincts it is an incorrect representation. His conceptions of foreign policy were in many ways more sensible, more practicable and more advanced than were those of the most ardent democrats.

The main articles of his faith were absorbed in boyhood and remained unchanged; his manner, as being a reflection of his temperament, seemed almost grotesquely rigid; yet his intelligence was mobile, adjustable, progressive. If we exaggerate the outward manifestations of Curzon's rigidity we are in danger of obscuring the fact that, in spite of his rigidity, he was a man of the very highest intelligence.

He had little faith, for instance, in a vague and sentimental internationalism. He believed, rather, that humanity could best be served by each nation contributing to the common good those special qualities with which history and Providence had endowed it. Internationalism, to him, was a subjective emotion capable of furnishing no firm basis on which to operate: nationalism, on the other hand, if humanely conceived, was concrete and creative.

By 'nationalism' he did not mean any form of arrant race-assertiveness. There was little of Palmerston, little even of Disraeli, in his political philosophy. He well realised that the age had passed when a Foreign Secretary could think in terms of 'dazzling strokes of policy, of baffled rivals and discomfited opponents; of perpetual shouting of challenges and waving of flags.'[1] 'We have,' he said, 'as I read the lessons of the time, to keep what we have obtained, sometimes almost against our will; not to seize anything else; to reconcile, not to defy; to pacify, not to conquer.'[2]

For the execution of these ideals certain methods were essential. Curzon had little faith in international conferences, knowing too well that the dramatic staging of such meetings involves public anticipation and a consequent need of subordinating concrete achievements to apparent results. At the best, they were 'long, complicated and often vexatious discussions.' At the worst they achieved compromises or panaceas which either misled the public mind, or inflated the currency of international contract. He

[1] Statement to Dominion Prime Minister, June 22, 1921.
[2] *Ibid*

believed insistently that all valuable diplomatic discussion should be founded first on knowledge and secondly on precision. 'There are', he said, 'two constituents of successful diplomacy, which seem to me sometimes in danger of being forgotten. One is knowing one's own mind, the other is letting other people know it'. The criticism of democratic diplomacy implied in that sentence is both durable and acute.

Above all he believed in truthfulness as the most forceful weapon in the whole diplomatic armoury. 'At least', he wrote, 'let me side with those who abhor the diplomatic lie.'[1] And in addressing the Dominion Prime Ministers thirty years later he expressed the same conviction in more elaborate terms :

> 'I think and hope that we have conveyed, not merely the impression, but the conviction that, whatever other governments or countries may do, the British Government is never untrue to its word, is never disloyal to its colleagues or its allies, never does anything underhand or mean ; and if this conviction be widespread, as I believe it to be, that is the real basis of the moral authority which the British Empire has long exerted and, I believe, will long continue to exert in the affairs of mankind.'[2]

Inevitably the question arises at this stage whether in making such superb asseverations Curzon was wholly sincere. Certain it is, that on many occasions he failed to live up to his own desire 'to reconcile and not to defy'. His temperament, in such instances, overrode his principles. Yet it cannot be said that on any occasion when he was acting in his own person and not merely as the mouthpiece of Lloyd George

[1] Curzon, *Persia and the Persian Question*: preface.

[2] Adress to Dominion Prime Ministers at Downing Street, October 5, 1923.

he was guilty either of imprecision or untruthfulness. The needle may have oscillated in moments of irritability, combativeness or rancour, but always there followed a period of calm when it pointed steadily. Always, in the end, he returned to the solemn clarity of his convictions.

It might be said, more truly, that these convictions bore little relation to the needs and proportions of the modern world. Essentially they were 'Roman' convictions, being based upon the ultimate theory that certain races are entitled (and indeed obliged) by their moral, mental and physical superiority to guide and control other races less favoured by Providence. In the final analysis this theory is one of physical force. Curzon himself, who was anything but a militarist, would have denied such a conclusion. Yet his indignation when confronted by some daring subordinate with this analysis suggests that he was not himself absolutely convinced. For him there was no alternative to such a theory. He was a nationalist and an imperialist to the depths of his soul. There have been other theories, less righteous, less logical, less outspoken and less sincere.

4

On the afternoon of Monday, January 6, 1919, Lord Curzon, accompanied by his personal secretary Mr. George Cunningham, drove down from Carlton House Terrace and alighted at the sidedoor of the Foreign Office in the Horse Guards Parade. He was received by Mr. George Clerk,[1] Acting Principal

[1] Sir George Clerk, subsequently Ambassador at Angora and now Ambassador in Paris.

Private Secretary, and ascended in the lift. He then walked across a strip of once scarlet drugget towards the room of the Secretary of State. He paused for a moment on the threshold surveying the large Turkey carpet, the gay fire-guard presented to Lord Salisbury by Li Hung Chang, the dimmed leather sofas and arm-chairs, the mahogany map-racks, the yellow standing-desk in the corner. Three of the bleak though curtained windows looked northwards across the Parade; three westwards across St. James's Park. He walked to the windows and twitched the curtains into less lodging-house folds. His eye travelled upwards to where the cast-iron beams of the ceiling had been disguised by Sir George Gilbert Scott under an etrusco-byzantine stencilling.

'How ghastly!' he murmured, 'how positively ghastly!'

Slowly, and with ill-concealed distaste, he advanced to the writing-table. He pointed towards it.

'And what, if I may ask, Mr. Clerk—is that?'

'That, Sir, is your writing-table.'

'I was not referring to the writing-table, Mr. Clerk. I was referring to that object upon its surface.'

'Well, Sir, that is your inkstand.'

'My inkstand, Mr. Clerk? I am dumbfounded. You assure me that this object is the inkstand of the Secretary of State? It must be replaced immediately. When I was at the Privy Council Office I was furnished with an inkstand of crystal and silver. This contraption, if I may say so, is merely brass and glass.'

Numerous, and on occasions legendary, are the stories of this nature which are told about Lord Curzon. Their full effect can only be conveyed by some-

one able to imitate the peculiar quality of his intonation and accent. When still at Balliol, he had taken lessons in elocution, and had derived therefrom the habit of filling his lungs with a supply of air, which, although necessary for a public oration, was more (far more,) than could be required for any private remark. Not that he raised his voice in conversation: Curzon was seldom known to shout; it was merely that the pneumatic pressure he had absorbed gave to his every word an explosive emphasis, and conveyed the impression that his final consonants, and even the commas on which he suspended his periods, were so many external checks or brakes applied to what, but for them, might have been an uncontrollable exhalation. This strange, this almost archaic, effect was increased by the fact that he persisted in retaining marked traces of the north-country dialect, and that in such words as 'ghastly', 'ask', 'brass' or 'glass' he employed the short Derby 'a' as in 'clash' or 'dash'. If to this disconcerting aural impression be added the awful majesty of his physical presence—that encased rigidity of the shoulders, that firm proconsular mask, that petulant and enquiring eye—it can be understood that many of those who met Curzon only on occasions should have felt frightened; or angry; or perplexed. Upon conceited people, as upon those whose personality was imperfectly adjusted to environment, he produced an effect of humiliation, for which, as is natural, they attempted to compensate themselves by poking fun at Curzon after they had left.[1] Upon very timid people the

[1] The 'pomposity' of Lord Curzon was not an attribute which those who saw him more than once or twice retained in their memory. Lord Riddell,

effect was one of wretched embarrassment mounting at moments to abject terror. Yet in inquisitive persons of well-balanced nerves he awoke an ardent desire to examine further, a wish to prove to themselves that no human being could possibly be like that all through. Such people, if they were averagely intelligent, patient and modest, were lavishly rewarded. In the first place they discovered to their amazement that the foreground itself was perfectly genuine and inevitable. And behind the foreground they discovered a very rich and varied personality—something human, humorous, genial, hospitable, emotional, sentimental, impulsive, childish, egoistic, wayward, credulous, lovable and pathetic.

Let it be hoped that some, at least, of his high qualities will emerge from the pages that follow. For the moment it is necessary to admit that it required several months of close association with Lord Curzon before even the most well-intentioned observer could wholly rid himself of a sense of unreality. It is this sense which is reflected in the stories that are told about him, of which the one quoted above is a typical example. There is, however, an important gloss which should be added. Most of these stories were told by Curzon against himself. He revelled in the 'brass and glass' story even as he revelled in the 'beano' story and the story about the brewery behind the lines.[1] His wide shoulders would rise and fall in

for instance, (a man acutely sensitive to affectation) writes as follows: 'Curzon is first-rate company, and I never find him pompous'. (Lord Riddell's *Intimate Diary*, vol. ii, p. 310.)

[1] The 'beano' story is as follows. A Cabinet Committee had been appointed under Curzon's chairmanship to consider the official celebration of the Armistice. A member suggested that every effort should be made to prevent popular rejoicings degenerating into the vulgarity of Mafeking

merriment at his own imitation. Yet only a few people were aware that these tales were told *by*, as well as *against*, himself.

5

On that January afternoon of 1919 Curzon lowered himself stiffly into the armed chair which fronts the desk of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He was established in a seat which he had ardently desired since boyhood and which for so many years had seemed to him impossible of attainment. In that very chair, in that very room, had sat James Harris 3rd Earl of Malmesbury, John Russell 1st Earl Russell, George Villiers 4th Earl of Clarendon, Edward Stanley 15th Earl of Derby, Robert Gascoyne Cecil 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, Granville Leveson Gower 2nd Earl Granville, Archibald Philip Primrose 5th Earl of Rosebery, Stafford Henry Northcote 1st Earl of Iddesleigh, John Wodehouse 1st Earl of Kimberley, Henry Petty Fitzmaurice 5th Marquess of Lansdowne, Edward Grey 1st Viscount Grey of Fallodon, and Arthur James Balfour 1st Earl of Balfour. That seat was now occupied by himself—George Nathaniel Curzon, K.G., P.C., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., F.R.S., Baron Curzon of Kedleston, Baron Ravensdale, Viscount Scarsdale and 1st Earl Curzon of Kedleston.

night. 'Yes', said Lord Curzon, 'at all costs we must avoid a *beano*.' He pronounced the word '*béahno*', imagining it to be an Italian expression rhyming with Téano. He was very fond of that story.

The 'brewery' story was as follows. Behind the lines in Flanders was a large brewery in the vats of which the private soldiers would bathe on returning from the trenches. Curzon was taken to see this dantesque exhibit. He watched with interest those hundred naked figures disporting themselves in the steam. 'Dear me!' he said, 'I had no conception that the lower classes had such white skins.' Curzon would deny the authenticity of this story, but loved it none the less.

He was the last of that unbroken line of Foreign Secretaries who had been born with the privileges of a territorial aristocracy and nurtured on the traditions of a governing class. Eton and Winchester, Christ Church and Balliol, Trinity and King's had moulded these calm, confident and unassuming men. They had always known each other; they had always understood each other; they had always, from generation to generation, handed down the same standards of personal conduct and of public duty. Liberal or Conservative, Radical or Unionist—whatever shades of difference might divide them on domestic problems—upon the main principles of Imperial and Foreign Affairs they felt alike; they thought alike; they acted alike.

For them the central purpose of British foreign policy was the maintenance of Empire and the security and prosperity of the British Isles. They sought to achieve this purpose by an undeviating adherence to three essential principles. The first was command of the seas. The second the balance of power in Europe. The third the defence of imperial frontiers and communications. To these three principles they added a corollary, namely that our security must be maintained without resort to war and with the least possible expenditure of men and money.

The simultaneous maintenance of these three principles was not an easy task. It allowed no scope for aggression, adventure or provocation. There were occasions (as at the time of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 and the agreement with Germany regarding the Baghdad Railway) when we found it necessary to relax one of our three principles in order

to strengthen the other two. Moreover, the many variants offered by our triple purpose imposed, not merely an adjustable, but at moments an opportunist, or even realistic, interpretation of our needs. It is not surprising that to continental countries (the diplomacy of which is largely governed by a single menace or desire) British policy, for all its essential continuity, should have seemed discontinuous, empirical and incoherent. It is even less surprising that they should have regarded us as selfish and 'un-European', which, being both insular and oceanic, we assuredly were. But it is strange that any continental country should have been so blind to the foundations of British policy as not to realise that although we might tolerate a menace to one, or even two, of our three principles, no British Government could fail to resist by war a threat aimed at all three of our principles at the same time. Yet in fact Germany threatened simultaneously our communications with India, our command of the seas, and the balance of power on the continent. Even a nation of shopkeepers, to whom peace means plenty, could not fail to be aroused.

So much for the purposes and principles of British foreign policy. Its methods were equally traditional. On the one hand there was pride, modesty, humanitarianism and chivalry. Our old diplomacy was the least self-conscious diplomacy which has ever existed; and the most concrete. It never sought for spectacular triumphs or verbal victories. It sought only for silent, practical achievements. There was nothing about it which was either vulgar or vain. On the other hand, our old diplomacy took for granted the consent and approval of the electorate. Conscious that it was pur-

suing only national purposes, and by methods consonant with the ethics and ideals of the whole people, it never supposed at any moment that it was exceeding its mandate; even as it always assumed that public opinion would, if force became necessary, support it by the willing provision of force. Much has, and will, be said of the assumption by the old diplomacy of responsibilities and commitments which, in the last resort, would have to be met by the self-sacrifice of the people at large. Of some continental Cabinets it might be said with truth that they committed their countries to dilemmas of which their electorates would not have approved. In the nervous exhaustion following upon the war this very accusation was made against British diplomacy of the pre-war period. Such an accusation misses the whole spirit and intention in which that diplomacy was conducted. Their terror of publicity was dictated, not by a desire to trick the public into an impossible position, but by a fear lest, when once popular emotion became engaged, a wave of national conceit might sweep away the fragile barriers of peace. Nor can those who remember with accuracy the emotionalism of July 1914 affirm that these apprehensions were devoid of reason.

The three principles and the resultant methods of British foreign policy have been examined at some length, since it was these which constituted the stupendous heritage to which (the last of a long line of predecessors) Lord Curzon succeeded. It remains to consider the corollary. It also was important. It established the theory that our vast imperial responsibilities should be maintained with the least possible

expenditure of men and money. To supplement this material deficiency we relied upon 'prestige'. And since it was our prestige, rather than our resources, which collapsed after the war, it is important to consider the nature of that prestige in order that, in the pages that follow, the stages of collapse may become more apparent.

The best analogy of the British imperial system is that of an old-established and conservative banking house controlling large resources and maintaining important branch establishments. There is an identical tradition, an identical caution, the same suspicion of adventurism, the same distaste for self-advertisement, experiments, boasting, arrogance or fuss. There is the same substratum of pride, complacency, honesty, loyalty and truth. There are the same outside criticisms of exploitation, obscurantism, backwardness, nepotism, and hypocrisy. Yet behind the virtues, the limitations, and the criticism, remains that important word 'credit'. What credit is to a large firm of bankers, prestige is to the administration of Empire. Our paper money was always in excess of our resources. The British in India were, as Curzon himself said, but 'a little foam on an unfathomable and dark ocean.' And this prestige was founded upon certain perfectly definable methods. Never to interfere unless your interference was decisive. Never to promise unless your promises could be fulfilled. Not to worry about what the other man might have at the back of his mind, but to make quite sure that he was in no doubt regarding the certainty of your own intentions. To be just, forgiving, and above all *reliable*. It is that last word which is the most essential. Upon the

reliability of British methods our prestige was based. So long as our rule appeared inevitable, it remained unquestioned. The slightest hint of hesitation, and our prestige declined. The mere suggestion that we were ourselves uncertain of our own inevitability, and our prestige would disappear.

It was these doubts, these hesitations, these inconsistencies of policy which undermined our prestige in the months that succeeded the most overwhelming victory that the British Empire has ever achieved.

The above digression has not been, perhaps, entirely otiose. In the chapters which follow much will be said about certain new developments and new states of mind which rendered difficult the application of the former theory. Yet it is important to realise that the resultant failure was due, not so much to the immensity of new obstructions, as to the fact that a large number of British citizens suddenly ceased to believe with absolute conviction in the theory of Empire. There are many people to-day who regard that theory as an evil theory and rejoice at its disintegration. They may be right. There are other people to-day who consider that the old theory was justified and that its eclipse is temporary only, and drawing to an end. They, also, may be right. The only people who are certainly wrong are those who imagine that the difficulties of the post-war period were wholly due to the errors of individual statesmen, or to the emergence of powerful forces of opposition; and not primarily to a weakening of, or let us say an alteration in, the national will.

Then there was Mr. Lloyd George.

It must be realised that Lord Curzon, on assuming charge of the Foreign Office in January 1919, was subjected to restrictions. He was, and remained until October 29 of that year, Secretary of State only *ad interim*. The *titular* responsibility for the conduct of British foreign policy rested, during those ten months, in the hands of A. J. Balfour. The *actual* responsibility was assumed by the Prime Minister.

Until December 1916, when he formed the second Coalition Government, Mr. Lloyd George had not shown any profound or continuous interest in foreign politics. True it is that in July 1911 he had intervened startlingly in the Agadir crisis, and that his name from that moment had become familiar to continental statesmen. Yet it was not until he established himself at No. 10 Downing Street that he discovered how vast a scope was offered in the wider fields of foreign policy to a man possessing vision, curiosity, experience of litigation, and unequalled powers of improvisation.

The art of diplomacy, as that of water-colours, has suffered much from the fascination which it exercises upon the amateur. It appears, at first sight, to require no elaborate equipment, no previous training, no technical education. A sheet of paper, three camel-hair brushes, some paint tubes from the shop in the village, a jam-pot filled with ordinary water—the artist is as well equipped as any Brabazon or Albert Goodwin. Yet for the execution, if not for the conception, of foreign policy, a certain previous training and practice is of distinct advantage.

It is customary, to-day, to contend that Mr. Lloyd George was less gifted as a diplomatist than as a War

Minister or a politician.[1] Such an assumption requires to be qualified. It must be qualified by the vital distinction which ought to exist between foreign policy and its execution. As a creator of policy, Lloyd George was often superb: as an executant he was often deplorable. His general conceptions were fully in accord with tradition; they were at once national and advanced. He aimed consistently at maintaining the three great principles of British foreign policy—the command of the seas, the balance of power in Europe, the defence of our imperial frontiers and communications. He endeavoured to safeguard our maritime supremacy by refusing, at great risk, to accept President Wilson's doctrine of the freedom of the seas. He sought to maintain a balance of power in Europe by securing that Germany should not be left at the mercy of a Franco-Polish alliance. And he tried to reinforce our imperial communications by placing Greece upon a strategical position on their flank. It may be questioned, perhaps, whether the freedom of the seas (which in altered conditions might have proved a protection to us rather than a disadvantage) ought to have been rejected. It may be questioned, again, whether the establishment of Greece as an almost vassal state in the Eastern Mediterranean was a conception as prudent as it was in-

[1] As an instance of the more extreme criticism of Mr. Lloyd George in his capacity of dictator of British foreign policy the reader is referred to a stimulating article contributed by Sir Valentine Chirol to the *Edinburgh Review* for January 1923 under the suggestive title of 'Four Years of Lloyd-Georgian Foreign Policy'.

'In the course of four years', writes Sir Valentine, 'Great Britain had lapsed from a position of unquestioned leadership into the inglorious isolation of deep and widespread distrust.'

The lapse is undeniable yet it was not exclusively due to Mr. Lloyd George.

genious. Yet it cannot be questioned that the main objectives of Mr. Lloyd George, as distinct from the methods by which he sought to attain these objectives, were fully in accord with the established traditions of British national and imperial policy.

It is thus the methods, rather than the purposes, of Mr. Lloyd George which are exposed to criticism. These methods can be divided into those of spirit and those of practice. Under both these headings he departed, and to some extent unfortunately, from established tradition.

Mr. Lloyd George does not possess the Anglo-Saxon temperament. His Celtic mysticism and imagination have, at moments of crisis, been of vast value to the British Empire. As manifested in the conduct of Foreign Affairs they have proved less efficacious. It has already been suggested that the influence of Great Britain, both in relation to foreign countries and to the component parts of the Empire, is based on credit or 'prestige'. That credit, in its turn, has been defined as resting upon 'reliability'. This essential element was lacking in the diplomacy of Mr. Lloyd George. The implication is not that the Prime Minister's methods were ever consciously evasive or misleading; the implication is that they were personal, forensic, intuitive, imprecise, variable, conceited and far too private.

It was above all this privacy which undermined confidence. It was not only a privacy of method, it was a privacy of aim. Had Mr. Lloyd George's policy been as open as it was persistent, less uneasiness would have been caused by the opaque and volatile methods by which he endeavoured to carry it out. His policy,

in important respects, was not open; it was impenetrably closed. Two of his main objectives (friendship with Russia, hostility to Turkey) were anathema both to the French Government and to his own Tory supporters in the Coalition Cabinet. He refrained, therefore, from openly admitting these objectives, and at moments he would openly deny them. But they persisted. He would return to them again and again. Gradually the impression was created that the Prime Minister, in certain vital directions, was pursuing a personal policy which he was unwilling either to avow or to abandon. An atmosphere of suspicion, an aroma of secret policy, hung about the white corridors of No. 10 Downing Street, and crept like poison gas among the garden huts which housed his secretariat.

Mr. Lloyd George has also been accused of taking upon himself too large a share of responsibility for Foreign Affairs.[1] Here again the criticism applies not so much to principle as to method.

The later stages of the war had necessitated unity of command, not in the field only, but also in the council room.[2] Mr. Lloyd George was abundantly justified in assuming during those years certain powers of direction and intervention which would not, in normal times, have been claimed by any Prime Minister. Even after the Armistice it was found that the main

[1] For instance, a Liberal writer such as Mr. Hugh Spender, in commenting on Curzon's 'strange passivity' under the Georgian system, could go so far as to describe the Foreign Secretary as 'scarcely more than a spectator of events'. (*Fortnightly Review*, March 1, 1924.)

[2] It should be noted that the subordination of the Foreign Office to No. 10 Downing Street dates from a pre-Georgian epoch—from the moment, that is, that a War Cabinet was constituted of which the Foreign Secretary was not a member.

threads of diplomacy stretched back into the period of the Supreme War Council. There was no single moment at which their continuity could be abruptly severed and the resultant loose ends entrusted to other hands.

Nor was this all. During the five years of Curzon's tenure of the Foreign Office, British policy was concerned with many minor and six major problems :

(1) The conclusion of peace with Germany and the resultant problem of Reparation.
(2) The conclusion of peace with Turkey, and its enforcement.
(3) The maintenance of a united front with France, and to a lesser degree, with Italy.
(4) The problem of Soviet Russia.
(5) Egypt.
(6) Persia.

True it is that it was only over the last, and least important, of these six major problems that Curzon was allowed to exercise unfettered control. Yet in regard to Egypt he was, in the early stages at least, given reasonable latitude of negotiation and the final intervention of the Cabinet, although ignorant and unwise, cannot be regarded as abnormal. Three of the remaining four problems were outside the scope of Curzon's direct interest. He had little knowledge of continental politics and the problem of Reparation filled him with bewildered distress. The Russian enigma—at least in its earliest stages—was too invidious a riddle to tempt him to any personal initiative. Anglo-French relations, in their first phase, were so organic a part of the Peace Conference that Curzon had neither the opportunity nor the desire to intervene.

Italy he had always regarded as a minor Power, and the Adriatic controversy seemed to him too squalid and too intricate to necessitate his personal attention. In these three problems, therefore, Curzon was not only prepared, but even anxious, to leave the responsibility to others.

It is an exaggeration therefore to contend, in so far as principle is concerned, that Mr. Lloyd George unwarrantably took upon himself whole regions of Foreign Office business against Curzon's will. His action was not unwarrantable. Curzon was not unwilling. In three out of the six major problems Curzon had no desire to assume responsibility. In two of the remaining three he was either allowed perfectly unrestricted scope, or subjected to perfectly normal management. It was only on the Eastern Question, on the question of the Turkish settlement, that his more expert opinion was deliberately ignored. That question, in all its bearings, will be examined later.

A more valid criticism against Mr. Lloyd George's system applies not to principle but to method. The mistake that the Prime Minister made was not in assuming too wide a responsibility, but in assuming it irresponsibly. Here again some exaggeration has crept in. Much has, for instance, been written against the amateur secretariat which the Prime Minister established in hutments in his own garden. Mr. A. L. Kennedy, for one, is indignant with Balfour and Curzon for having 'acquiesced in the virtual relegation of the Foreign Office to a subordinate department of the Premiership.'[1] True it is that Mr. Lloyd

[1] *Old Diplomacy and New*, by A. L. Kennedy, p. 279.

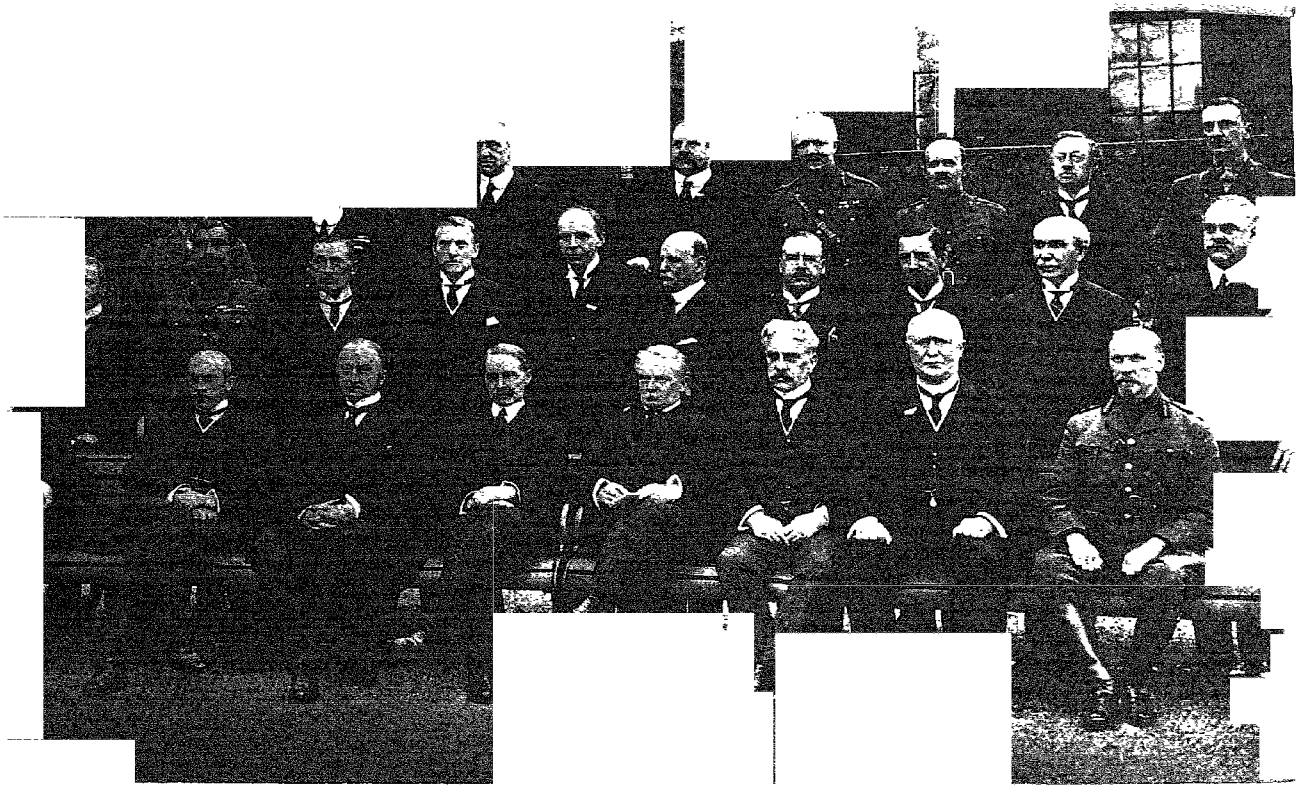
George had little liking for the less amenable type of civil servant and that he regarded the officials of the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Service with particular distaste.[1] True it is that during those four years Great Britain was regarded by foreign countries as possessing two voices—the official voice of the Foreign Office, the still small voice of No. 10. True it is also that much was said and done in the garden of Downing Street which ought not to have been said and done, and of which the Foreign Office should in any case have been kept informed. Yet, on the whole, the legend of the Garden Suburb is in greater danger of being exaggerated than of being minimised.[2]

Upon a nature as sensitive and egocentric as that of Curzon the very existence of the garden suburb—the occasional indiscretions which transpired, the uneasy feeling that there were many other indiscretions which were not allowed to transpire—had none the less a most unsettling effect.[3] There were moments when he felt that Mr. Lloyd George and his scribes were pursuing a policy opposed to that recommended by the Foreign Office and confirmed by the Cabinet. Even

[1] 'I want no diplomats', he exclaimed to Prince Sixte de Bourbon-Parma in 1917, 'diplomats were invented simply to waste time.' (G. de Manteyer, *Austria's Peace Offer*, pp. 168 ff.)

[2] It must be admitted that Mr. Lloyd George approached international negotiation in the spirit, not of a diplomatist, but of an attorney. He attached more importance to adjustment than he did to precision. (See Lord Riddell's *Intimate Diary*, p. 206, third paragraph, for a terribly damaging confession.)

[3] Lord Curzon used to complain bitterly that, of all Government Departments, the Foreign Office was the only one which was never permitted to conduct itself. Interference which would have been strongly resented by the India Office or the Service Departments was assumed by the Cabinet to be legitimate and commendable when applied to the Foreign Office. If things went well, the Cabinet took the credit; if things went badly, it was the Foreign Office who were blamed.



IMPERIAL WAR CABINET: May 1917

Back Row: Captain L. Amery, Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, Sir Edward Carson, Lord Derby, Sir Frederick Maurice, Sir M. Hankey, Mr. H. C. Lambert, Major Storr.

Second Row: Sir S. Sinha, Maharajah of Bikanir, Sir J. Meston, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Lord Robert Cecil, Mr. Walter Long, Sir J. Ward, Sir George Perley, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Hazen.

Front Row: Mr. Arthur Henderson, Lord Milner, Lord Curzon, Mr. Bonar Law, Mr. Lloyd George, Sir Robert Borden, Mr. Massey, General Smuts.

in January of 1919 he began to torture himself with dark forebodings regarding the 'Secret de l'Empereur'. To some extent these suspicions were little more than hallucinations. Yet the highly original, and at times secretive, policy pursued by Mr. Lloyd George in regard to the Eastern Question did in fact give serious substance to Curzon's uneasiness.

The first stage of that strangest of all post-war complications—the Eastern Question from 1919-1923—will be examined in the chapter that follows.

Chapter III

THE EASTERN QUESTION

October 1918-*May* 1919

Danger of false scale of proportion in estimating Turkish problem—The Turks neither as important nor as successful as has been supposed—Yet Turkish problem constitutes a valuable 'specimen' in analysis of post-war diplomacy—Essential that any such analysis should distinguish superficial or temporary factors from fundamental causes—Among the fundamental causes of error was attempt on part of Conference to combine peace of imposition with peace of consent—This attempt due to desire of victorious democracies to obtain spoils without further effort—Curzon saw through this fallacy—His own plan for Turkish settlement was based on applying force to Turkey in Europe and achieving consent in Turkey in Asia—He warned Lloyd George against partitioning Asia Minor in view of inevitable decrease in our powers of imposition and in Turkish powers of resistance—Both his plan and his warnings ignored—Reason for this was that Lloyd George had been already committed by secret treaties to partition off Asia Minor—And wished to use Turkish territory to provide compensations for Italian and French surrenders on European problems—Estimate of incompatibility between the Curzon and Lloyd George points of view.

I

In January of 1919 the liquidation of the Ottoman Empire was regarded by the statesmen of Europe as a matter of secondary importance—as a mere cloud no larger than a man's hand. By October of 1922 this cloud had swollen into a typhoon—submerging Asia Minor in blood and ashes, wrecking the coalition of the victorious Powers, and raising in England a tidal wave beneath which Mr. Lloyd George and his Government were overwhelmed.

This sensational contrast between what the statesmen thought in 1919 and what happened in 1922 has

tended to obscure the real proportions of the issue. Two legends have emerged. The first legend is that the Peace Conference, in ignorance and malice, wholly misjudged the urgency and real nature of the Eastern Question. The second legend is that Turkey, alone of the defeated Powers, was able successfully to defy the Western Alliance.

Neither of these two legends is wholly accurate.

It is true that the Supreme Council did not, in those early months of 1919, attribute to the Turkish settlement that importance which it subsequently acquired. They realised that to apply to it the title of 'The Eastern Question' was to commit an error in historical perspective. That title carried with it associations dating back to Catherine the Second, Kutchuk Kainardji, San Stefano and the Congress of Berlin. It bore no relation whatsoever to the proportions of power existing subsequent to the armistice of Mudros. Even in the period from 1774 to 1917 when the Eastern Question had loomed gigantic upon the horizons of diplomacy, Turkey herself had been only of geographical, and not of intrinsic, importance. The essential factors had been Russia's drive to the Black Sea, the rivalry between Petersburg and Vienna in the Balkans, and the German '*Drang nach Osten*' as symbolised by the Baghdad Railway. In 1919 these factors of disturbance had disappeared. Russia was inextricably involved in internal troubles which, to all seeming, would endure for a generation. Germany and Austria were no longer capable of any Near Eastern adventures. And Turkey herself lay completely at the mercy of the Allied and Associated Powers.

The Paris Conference were thus justified in regarding

Turkey as of comparatively minor importance. She remains of comparatively minor importance to this day. They were correct, also, in assuming that the Eastern Question, in its former shape, was no longer a reality. Even to-day there are few signs that this menace is likely to revive.[1] The fact that from 1920 to 1923 Turkey once again figured as a central problem in European diplomacy was due to the almost chance circumstance that she became the occasion (although not the cause) of disintegration among the leading Allied Powers. Great errors of procrastination and misjudgment were indubitably committed. But it is a mere legend to assert that the Supreme Council, in that year 1919, saw Turkey in a false perspective. On the contrary, their proportions were essentially more accurate and well-informed than those by which the Turkish question is often judged to-day.

The second legend, which has also attained some currency, is that Turkey emerged triumphant from the European War. The actual results of Turkey's adherence to the cause of the Central Powers can be summarised as follows. She was forced to abandon her claim to Egypt, Tripoli, Barca, the Dodecanese, the Aegean Islands, and Cyprus. She lost Syria, the Lebanon, Palestine and what is now known as Transjordania. She was deprived of the guardianship of the Holy Places and of the prestige she had derived therefrom throughout the Islamic world. The provinces of the Hedjaz and the Yemen were torn from her grasp. Mesopotamia, with its vast potential resources, declared itself independent. In 1912 the Ottoman

[1] It is possible, of course, that Nazi Germany may revive the Berlin-Baghdad idea in order to offset possible disappointment regarding East Prussia.

Empire had, in theory at least, covered 1,500,000 square miles, and the Sultan could claim dominion over 36,000,000 people. As a result of the Balkan Wars and the European War the present Turkish State comprises only 445,609 square miles with a population of only 13,648,270. Turkey entered the war as the still powerful Ottoman Empire: she emerged from it as an Asiatic Republic, scarcely larger than the state of Hyderabad. Such is the measure of her successful defiance of the Allied Powers.

It has been necessary to correct these two legends at the outset since, unless it be realised that at no time was Turkey, as such, either enormously important or enormously successful, the whole scale of values is likely to be falsified. The temporary significance which she assumed between 1920 and 1923 was due to incidental causes: it bore little relation, either to the Eastern Question of the past, or to actual proportions of power in the future. To exaggerate the local and temporary results of the Allied discomfiture regarding the Turkish settlement leads to the danger that its general causes may also be misinterpreted. In few problems is it so difficult to reach, or to maintain, a proper standard of proportion.

Although, however, it is essential to minimise the significance of Turkey as a factor in post-war history, it is scarcely possible to overestimate her importance as an incident in post-war diplomacy. As an illustration of the psychological changes which affected the Oriental mind after 1905 Turkey is invaluable. As a specimen of the difficulties and errors which were faced and committed by the statesmen of 1919-1923 she is unequalled. As an 'exhibit' in any clinical

examination of the mentality of the victors in the European War she is unsurpassed.

For the purpose of this study the value of that exhibit is enhanced by the fact that from start to finish the liquidation of the Turkish Empire became the most central of Curzon's preoccupations; that it was one of the major causes of his disagreement with Mr. Lloyd George; and that in the handling of this problem he displayed, as in no other issue, the faults and virtues of his statecraft.

The Turkish problem will thus constitute a recurrent, perhaps even a main, theme throughout this narrative. In its later stages Curzon was intimately and personally involved. For its earlier stages he was in no sense responsible. Yet the seeds of Curzon's subsequent disappointments were sown during those months of 1919. It was not by his hand that these seeds were sown.

2

Let the Turkish question, therefore, be taken as an 'exhibit' in this inquest upon post-war diplomacy. Few specimens could be more typical or more illuminating. On the one side there is the 'ordinary' explanation. It is very easy to attribute the misconceptions of the Supreme Council to such personal defects as folly, ignorance, vanity, recklessness and even spite. These personal elements may, or may not, have contributed to the confusion which ensued. Yet, if an autopsy upon the policy of the conquering Powers is to be of any scientific value, it will be preferable to subordinate such superficial considerations to an examination of more fundamental causes.

What is meant by 'superficial considerations'? The following two instances will suffice to show that such an expression embraces something more than mere personalities.

A whole category of excuses can be advanced in favour of the Supreme Council. Some of these excuses will be dealt with in the sections that follow. Yet the major excuse is that we are to-day criticising, with wisdom after the event, a situation which, in 1919, was infinitely less definable. The main factors, which to-day seem so obvious, were at that date shrouded in legitimate uncertainty: other factors, which are to-day ignored, were in 1919 of the utmost prominence. In 1919, for instance, it was not believed (and with some justification) that Russia would be in any immediate position to exert any influence upon the Turkish settlement. Conversely, President Wilson insisted on assuring his somewhat sceptical colleagues that he would, by the force of his own uplift, induce the United States to assume vast responsibilities, perhaps at Constantinople and certainly in Armenia. Is it so astonishing that the Supreme Council discounted Russia, and felt obliged to await the decision of the United States? We now know that in the end the American people refused to assume any responsibility whatsoever, whereas the Soviet Government supplied to Mustapha Kemal the sinews of a second war. Each of these events might have seemed possibilities in 1919: they could never, in any reasonable judgment, have been regarded as certainties. And the Supreme Council were obliged, in conditions of such obscurity, to adopt a waiting attitude.

Such explanations (and there are several of an

analogous nature) throw light upon the foreground of post-war diplomacy. They throw little light upon its background, and, to that extent, they are superficial. Before dealing with such topical and momentary errors it is therefore necessary to examine the more fundamental difficulties and fallacies to which, in the years immediately following the Armistice, the statesmen of the Allied Coalition were exposed.

3

The essential misfortune of post-war diplomacy was that it found itself at the mercy of two formulas. The first was the Roman, or aristocratic, formula of *authority*. The second was the American, or democratic, formula of *consent*.

The Allied statesmen in Paris were the servants, and indeed the victims, of their own public opinion. That opinion, in 1919, was passing through an illogical phase. On the one hand, the democracies of Europe were determined, now that victory had been achieved, to renounce all further physical effort. On the other hand, they expected their statesmen to obtain, and to preserve for them, the most triumphant spoils. The realisation of victory led public opinion to demand a peace of imposition. The exhaustion left by the war incapacitated them from anything but a peace of consent. The Supreme Council felt themselves obliged to obtain those fruits of victory for which their democracies clamoured; yet they knew, or should have known, that the same democracies would refuse to supply the effort by which alone these fruits could be plucked and garnered. Only a statesman of commanding international authority and almost super-

human powers of persuasion could have induced the victorious democracies either to renounce the spoils of victory or to supply the will and energy which would be required if all these spoils were to be collected and preserved. In the year 1919 no such statesman existed.

Faced as they were by this perhaps inevitable misfortune, the Allied statesmen in Paris did little or nothing to mitigate its effects. They endeavoured to combine the two formulas by imposing the maximum of force upon our enemies, and by according 'consent', in the form of unrestricted self-determination, only to our friends. Such a solution of the dilemma was neither intelligent nor wise. It left our enemies with the impression of revolting hypocrisy and unjustified duress. It encouraged our friends to make demands which, if granted, could only become the causes of future disturbance.

The essential fallacy, therefore, committed by the Supreme Council was to imagine that the two formulas of force and consent could, wholly irrespective of geography or psychology, be combined. In dealing with highly civilised, and therefore sensitive, organisms such as the Central Powers, this combination might survive for a decade or two owing to the nervous prostration of the victims. Yet in dealing with purely animal organisms such as Turkey there was no nervous prostration: the victim recovered overnight; and this unnatural combination of the elements of 'force' and 'consent' failed to operate. Nor was their misunderstanding one of logic or psychology alone; it was also a misunderstanding of immediate realities. The doctrine of force, particularly in its application

to 'backward' races, is based, not merely upon overwhelming physical power, but on certain moral forces behind that power. The peoples exercising that authority must believe in its ethical justification and must possess a united will for its continuance. The peoples upon whom that authority is exercised must, for their part, be convinced of its inevitability, and must never come to regard it as an outrage on individual dignity. These conditions did not exist in 1919. The victorious democracies had small conception of the responsibilities of empire, and had thus little faith in its ethical justification. Their will to exercise authority was in no sense either united or continuous. Conversely, the subject races on whom that authority was to be exercised no longer took its inevitability for granted; and, what was far more serious, they had come in recent years to regard national subordination as a personal affront. It was not only that nationalism, as understood in Europe during the last half of the nineteenth century, had crossed over to Africa and Asia. It was that the individualism which had been born in the Renaissance and transmuted during the French Revolution, had at last taken root in the Oriental consciousness. Nationalism had thus become both objective and subjective—both a political and racial aspiration and a personal religion. It had become inflamed by the emotions of a self-conscious individualism. And consent, under such an emotion, is a rare and variable thing.

The Supreme Council in Paris had no clear realisation of this their fallacy, or of this their fundamental psychological difficulty. They misunderstood, even, the more practical realities of their position. The

physical force possessed by the victorious Powers was, to all appearance, overwhelming. Yet even in its most material elements it was an asset which, from November 1918 onwards, was rapidly melting away. Democracy in every country insisted upon immediate demobilisation: the call for financial retrenchment was even more irresistible; and the blockade was not a weapon which it was possible indefinitely to employ. The fear of Germany might still have galvanised the exhausted will of the Coalition to make one further effort to complete their conquest. There was no fear of Turkey. It was an error to suppose that, in any circumstances, the democracies of the west would be willing to make a combined or continuous effort to impose the authority of Paris upon a distant Asiatic country.

To Curzon alone among those responsible for British foreign policy was this general fallacy, as well as its particular application to the Turkish settlement, apparent from the first.

4

Sitting in his armed chair at the Foreign Office he watched with increasing disquiet the dilatory and haphazard methods by which, in Paris, the Turkish settlement was being endangered. The information which reached him regarding the intentions of the Prime Minister was intermittent and incomplete. True it was that every morning an aeroplane would rise from the dew-soaked meadows of Le Bourget and that by 11 a.m. he would have before him the minutes of the meetings which the Supreme Council and the several Committees had held upon the previous day. These minutes were in themselves informative and useful.

They told him almost exactly what had happened yesterday; yet they gave him no conception of what was likely to happen to-morrow. They indicated merely that the Supreme Council were acting upon no scientific programme and with no prepared agenda. They showed that the Conference were working upon no prearranged time-table and possessed no central focus of authority. They convinced him that however brilliant might be the diplomatic tactics of M. Clemenceau and Mr. Lloyd George there was in both an almost complete absence of diplomatic strategy.

And what was being said and thought outside the official meetings of the Council of Ten? What was happening at the headquarters of the British Delegation, in those dim carpeted rooms at the Villa Majestic, in the thin bare corridors of the Astoria? What, more importantly, was being planned at the Rue Nitot, in Mr. Lloyd George's flat upon the first floor, in A. J. Balfour's flat upon the second? Was there such a thing as an agreed Allied policy in regard to Turkey? Increasingly insistent and querulous became the questions which poured in upon the Astoria from the Foreign Office. How far could any reliance be placed in President Wilson's assertion that the United States might accept a mandate for Armenia and even Constantinople? Had any compromise been reached with the French regarding the northern frontier of Mesopotamia? How long were British naval forces to be retained in the Bosphorus? What was the real meaning of these rumours regarding a Greek zone at Smyrna and an Italian zone at Adalia? Was any section of the Conference, or even of the British Delegation, considering the Turkish question as a whole?

Such questions, when answered at all, were answered evasively. The first task before the Conference was to prepare the Covenant of the League of Nations and to draft a peace with Germany and the Central Powers. Meanwhile the Turkish problem had not been forgotten. Much 'useful preparatory work' had already been accomplished. M. Venizelos had, on two separate occasions, been granted an audience by the Council of Ten. The Greek Committee had been constituted and had already held six meetings. President Wilson was 'fairly certain' about Armenia but would have to sound American opinion before committing the United States to any responsibilities for Constantinople and the Straits. The question of Mosul would again be discussed with M. Clemenceau so soon as a favourable occasion offered. With such optimistic evasions Curzon, for the moment at least, was obliged to rest content.

His ability, either to obtain full information or to impose his opinion, was diminished, not merely by the indeterminate nature of his own position, but by the fact that the Foreign Office staff was itself split into two sections. The leading figures in the departmental hierarchy—Lord Hardinge, Sir Eyre Crowe, Sir William Tyrrell and Sir Eric Drummond—were themselves in Paris, and as such under the direction of A. J. Balfour. Those who remained in London to assist Lord Curzon were unable therefore to speak with the maximum of departmental authority or experience. It must be confessed that the staff of the British Delegation in Paris did not, during those months, treat their own colleagues in the Foreign Office with that attention or consideration which was their due. In practice, the pressure of work at the

Conference was too overwhelming to render possible any very perfect liaison between the Astoria and Downing Street. Yet inevitably the Foreign Office, and not Lord Curzon only, felt aggrieved.

Conscious as he was of the falsity and impotence of his position, Curzon during those months turned his abundant energies towards the administration of the Office itself. Until his advent, each paper entered in the registry was encased and remained in its own separate 'jacket'. The several files would, when wanted, be sent up as a pile of self-contained docket-sheets bound together by a single piece of white tape. This system, once it had been mastered, possessed great advantages. Curzon refused either to acquire the mastery of the system or to recognise its merits. He insisted upon introducing into the Foreign Office the file system which had obtained in the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India. Instead of being placed in a jacket of its own, each paper as it arrived was affixed to the top of its own file, and these files were encased in a large folder. Any previous paper mentioned in the minutes had to be 'flagged'. It was this flagging process which caused such pain and irritation. The flags consisted of tabs of thick scarlet paper marked 'A' 'B' 'C' 'D' and so on through the letters of the alphabet. These tabs had to be affixed to any back page in the file to which reference was made in the current minute. They were affixed by means of pins. These pins, in their turn, were strong and sharp; they were apt to pierce the fingers of the Foreign Office officials. Curzon's reform of the file system was not unaccompanied by blood and tears.

As January slipped into February and February into March, the reports from Paris became more and more disquieting. The High Commissioners at Constantinople were also manifesting anxious impatience. Already in January Curzon had circulated to the Prime Minister and his colleagues a memorandum which he had written a year previously and in which his views on the Turkish settlement were set out with all his wonted clarity. By March he realised that even this simple if drastic settlement would be jeopardised by further delay. On the 25th of that month he circulated a second memorandum. By April, he foresaw that the allocation to Greece of Smyrna and the adjoining territory would lead to certain disaster. On April 22 he composed and circulated a third memorandum. The first of these three documents shows that Curzon, eleven months before our final victory, had a lucid and feasible conception of the main lines of the Turkish settlement. The second proves that he at least realised that any further delay would render the Allies incapable of imposing their will upon Turkey. And the third completely exonerates him from any share in the Asia Minor disaster and from any responsibility for the errors which, in the years that followed, he was called upon to remedy.

These three memoranda are of such importance to Curzon's reputation as a statesman that they must be summarised in the section that follows.

5

His first memorandum was written on January 2, 1918, but only circulated to the Cabinet a year later. It suggested a settlement of the Turkish question

which, had it been adopted, would have proved feasible, permanent and just.

The solution which Curzon proposed was, except in one particular, based upon the formula of consent. Instead of driving Oriental nationalism into opposition it was upon those very elements of nationalism that a durable settlement could alone be based. Thus, whereas the subject races of Turkey, the Arabs and the Armenians, were to be given the right of self-determination and independence, that right was also to be accorded to the Turks. The Anatolian peninsula, which since the Seljuks has become the homeland of the Turkish race, was to be preserved in its integrity for the future Turkish State. There was to be no partition of Turkey proper for the benefit of the Greeks, the French or the Italians. Turkey, with her capital at Angora or Broussa, was to be guaranteed complete liberty, independence and integrity. By this means only could an outburst of Turkish nationalism be averted.

It was important, on the other hand, that the Turkish problem should once and for all be removed from European diplomacy and that Moslem opinion in India and elsewhere should be made to realise that Turkey, having been completely defeated in the war, could no longer pose as the triumphant soldier of Islam. For this purpose an operation 'at once drastic and decisive' should be performed. Turkey must be deprived of her European possessions; Constantinople and the Straits must be entrusted to other hands.

'For nearly five centuries', he wrote, 'the presence of the Turk in Europe has been a source of distraction, intrigue and corruption in European politics; of oppres-

sion and misrule to the subject nationalities; and an incentive to undue and overweening ambitions in the Moslem world. It has encouraged the Turk to regard himself as a Great Power, and has enabled him to impose upon others the same illusion. It has placed him in the position to play off one Power against another, and in their jealousies and his own machinations to find pretexts for his continued immunity.'

Yet if, for these cogent reasons, the Turk must be banished to Asia, what authority was to succeed him as guardian of Constantinople and the Straits? The Power clearly indicated as such a guardian was Great Britain, whose resources and responsibilities entitled her to this inheritance. Yet the British Empire would emerge from the war with other and perhaps increased obligations, nor would any British Government 'dream of adding to them by the assumption of so vast and perilous a charge.' Constantinople and the Straits must therefore be entrusted to other hands. They must be internationalised under the League of Nations with a Commission, if possible under American chairmanship, charged with the task of keeping open the Straits and of safeguarding Constantinople as 'the cosmopolis or international city of the Eastern World'.

Such a solution appears to us to-day obvious in its simplicity; it is difficult to understand why it was not at once adopted by the British Government as a full statement of their policy towards Turkey. The reasons for its rejection will be examined later. For the moment is is only necessary to remark that the Curzon plan would, if imposed during the course of 1919, have been accepted by Turkey and India with

pained but durable acquiescence. In all areas where the authority of the Allies could not be rendered immediately effective the plan was based upon the consent and interests of the local populations. The only area where force was required for its imposition was the area of Constantinople and the Straits where it was easy both to concentrate and to maintain strong naval pressure. Once the Turks had been expelled from Europe and an international administration established at Constantinople, no Ghazi Pasha would have been able, or would even have desired, to challenge a system so overpowering and so strategically entrenched.

Curzon's second memorandum was addressed to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet on March 25, 1919. 'I wish', he wrote, 'to express to my colleagues certain apprehensions which I cannot help entertaining about the progress of events in the Near and Middle East.' He then proceeded to warn them that hopes of possible resistance were beginning to revive among our defeated enemies. The Dardanelles forts were held only by weak Allied detachments and had not yet been dismantled or destroyed. Behind the frontage of a subservient Sultan and Government at Constantinople, the Turkish nationalists, and what remained of the old Committee of Union and Progress, were still active and were, owing to the delays at Paris, beginning to take heart. In 1913 Enver Pasha[1] had

[1] Enver Pasha, b. 1881; Young Turk leader; commanded in Tripoli war and in Balkan wars made *coup d'état*, shot Nazim Pasha with his own hand, and denounced armistice which was about to be concluded. Takes advantage of second Balkan war to reoccupy Adrianople. A national hero. In European war fails to get on with Germans and is no success as a military leader. In 1918 escapes to Germany and then to Russia. Quarrels with Soviet and assists the Bokharans in rebellion against Moscow. Killed in battle, 1923. A small, ruthless, arrogant little man with the appearance of a Berlin barber and the cruelty of a Kurd.

been able, owing to dissensions among the victorious Balkan States, to snatch an eleventh-hour victory from what had seemed irretrievable defeat. That experiment might again be repeated. On every hand the Young Turks, the nationalists, could observe a decline in the Allied will to victory. The British were evacuating Transcaspia and would shortly evacuate the whole Batoum-Baku line. The Franco-Greek expedition to Southern Russia had been followed by an inglorious collapse. Egypt was in a state of ferment. It was already whispered that France and Great Britain were in acute disagreement over Syria and Mosul. It was upon a picture of disintegration and disunion in the once irresistible Coalition that 'the Old Turk, who still hopes to re-establish the former régime, and the Young Turk, who means to cheat us, if he can, of the spoils of victory, look out from the crumbling watchtowers of Stambul.'

His third memorandum followed some three weeks later, on April 18, 1919. It was by then apparent that the Turkish settlement was regarded in Paris, not as an integral problem requiring solution in its own terms, but as the area of least resistance in which compensations could be found wherewith to bribe several esurient Powers to relinquish their claims in Europe itself. Not only was France to have Cilicia and Greece the Smyrna hinterland, but Italy was to be paid in Turkish territory for the sacrifices demanded of her in the Adriatic. Already Italian troops had landed at Adalia and were about to occupy Konia. It was hinted even that Italy would be given some fantastic mandate for the Caucasus and receive the mines of Eregli. Against this impossible settlement Curzon

entered a formidable protest. Could Italy, who had, it seemed, accepted her Caucasian mandate, 'with a rashness for which it is difficult to find a parallel', possibly imagine that she could maintain herself in so distant and disturbed an area? Could Greece, 'who cannot keep order five miles outside the gates of Salonika', be trusted to establish peace and security throughout the vilayet of Aidin? Italy should be begged to 'desist from an act of such deplorable levity, for which no justification can be found on any plea of local self-determination, of public or private interest, of morality or even of expediency.' The policy of partitioning Asia Minor was not only unjust but dangerous:

> 'That the Turks should be deprived of Constantinople is, in my opinion, inevitable and desirable as the crowning evidence of their defeat in the war; and I believe that it will be accepted with whatever wrathful reluctance by the Eastern world. But when it is realised that the fugitives are to be kicked from pillar to post and that there is to be practically no Turkish Empire and probably no Caliphate at all, I believe that we shall be giving a most dangerous and most unnecessary stimulus to Moslem passions throughout the Eastern world and that sullen resentment may easily burst into savage frenzy.'

Such arguments, based as they were on long experience, deep study and calm vision, strike us to-day as unassailable. Had Curzon's advice been taken both Europe and Asia would have been spared five years of tragedy and dislocation. His advice was not taken. His opinion was ignored.

This record is an attempt to tell what happened; it is not an attempt to theorise on what might have

happened had fate been more kind and man more enlightened. To-day Curzon's suggestions and criticisms appear to us unanswerable. Yet at the time there were many factors which obscured the trenchancy of that advice. Unquestionably, and from start to finish, Curzon was in the right. Yet those who disagreed with him were not quite so wilful, obstinate or ignorant as is sometimes supposed. There was another side to the whole problem.

It will now be convenient to examine the other side.

6

It must be remembered, in the first place, that whereas Curzon, in the comparative calm of the Foreign Office, was enabled to concentrate all the energies of his mind and memory upon the Eastern Question, the negotiators in Paris were obsessed by other considerations of even more urgent importance. An exaggerated idea of Curzon's precision and vision might be conveyed were no mention to be made of the fact that on other aspects of the Conference which were most important he expressed no opinion at all. In regard to the Turkish question he was undoubtedly more sensible and far-sighted than were Lloyd George or Balfour. Yet the Turkish question, essentially, was only a minor question. Upon major questions—such as Germany, the Rhineland, Reparation, Poland, and Russia—Curzon evolved or communicated no ideas whatsoever. If the scale of values is to remain correct, this surely important omission must be borne in mind.

In the second place, the Turkish problem was itself not nearly so simple or so detached as Curzon's memoranda might suggest. In stating his proposals,

in formulating his criticism, he took small account of the factors which rendered the former difficult of attainment and which subjected the latter to many important qualifications. Before concluding that Mr. Lloyd George was acting with insensate folly in rejecting Curzon's suggestions, it would be preferable to examine under what conditions, and subject to what previous commitments, Mr. Lloyd George elaborated a policy of his own. Only by examining both sides of the question is it possible to arrive at any final judgment.

The Curzon plan, admirable as it was in its appreciation of the physical and moral realities of the moment, possessed one not unimportant defect. It was based on the assumption (an assumption on which Lord Curzon's schemes were, with curious frequency, apt to be founded) that Great Britain was in the position to impose her own solution of international problems, not only upon the victim of that solution, but also upon the Allied and Associated Powers. Such an imposition, in the year 1919, was scarcely feasible. Mr. Lloyd George, for other and more vital purposes, was obliged to maintain, both with his Allies and his Associate, relations of comparative accord. In the conditions prevailing in 1919 it would have been impossible for him to provoke a rupture with them upon the question of Asia Minor. Nor was this all. Great Britain was committed, at least towards France and Italy, by explicit contractual obligations which Curzon, in his memoranda (brilliant as they assuredly were), had found it convenient to ignore.

The exigencies of the war had necessitated certain secret treaties. It is considered laudable to-day to

dismiss these treaties as symptoms of the more evil machinations of the old diplomacy. Indubitably, as treaties, they were bad treaties. They became not inconvenient merely, but highly onerous. Yet they existed. They represented the price paid, at moments of danger, either for the adherence or the encouragement of potential and actual Allies. In return for these treaties and the promises which they contained, certain Governments had been prepared to sacrifice the lives of their electors. They constituted a contract cemented by blood. It was quite impossible for Mr. Lloyd George, now that victory had been achieved, to contend that these treaties were ill-attuned to the spirit of pacific righteousness induced by President Wilson. In so far as Great Britain was concerned, he was obliged to honour the bond. It is unfitting to censure Mr. Lloyd George for having manifested some sensitiveness towards these obligations.

Four of such treaties had, since 1914, been entered into by the British Government.

The first is known as 'The Constantinople Agreement' of May 18, 1915. By that engagement Great Britain agreed that Russia should obtain, in complete possession, Constantinople and the Straits. In return for this dramatic concession, Great Britain would be allowed to absorb within her own zone of interest the 'neutral zone' established in Persia by the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907. This treaty, it is true, was in 1919 no longer operative. It had been denounced by the Soviet Government in 1917, and was formally cancelled by the Russo-Persian agreement of February 27, 1921, and by the Russo-Turkish agreement of March 16 following. The Constanti-

nople agreement did, however, bequeath to the Paris Conference the legacy of two subconscious ideas. The first idea was that it would be unfair upon an absent Russia to dispose of Constantinople and the Straits to any Power, or combination of Powers, other than Turkey. The second idea was that Russia might, eventually, 'recover', and that in that event she might, if America repudiated President Wilson, be induced to assume a mandate (and an extremely forcible mandate) over Armenia and the eastern vilayets. The Constantinople agreement, therefore, although not an obligatory instrument, had a certain effect. It made people more uncertain than they ought to have been about the Straits: and less uncertain than they ought to have been about Armenia.

The second secret treaty was that under which Italy betrayed her allies and entered the war upon the side of their enemies. In this treaty the element of price was very emphatic. It is known by the name of the 'Treaty of London of April 26, 1915'. Among the numerous bribes offered to, and accepted by, Italy on that occasion were vague compensations in Asia Minor. The treaty did not have the benefit of very expert drafting since the experts were too disgusted to draft. Yet Article 9 of that treaty exercised a very disturbing influence upon the Turkish settlement. Its terms may be shortened as follows:

> 'Great Britain, France and Russia recognize that Italy is interested in the balance of power in the Mediterranean. . . . In the event of a total or partial partition of Turkey in Asia she ought to obtain a just share of the Mediterranean region adjacent to the province of Adalia. . . . The interests of Italy shall also be taken into con-

sideration in the event of the territorial integrity of the Turkish Empire being maintained and of alterations being made in the zones of interest of the Powers. If France, Great Britain and Russia occupy any territories in Turkey during the course of the war, the Mediterranean region bordering on the province of Adalia, within the limits indicated above, shall be reserved to Italy who shall be entitled to occupy it.'

Few clauses could have been more unscientifically worded. What, for instance, was meant by a 'just share'? What by 'the Mediterranean region adjacent to the province of Adalia'? That might be interpreted as including Konia and the whole south-western seaboard. What, again, was implied by the 'zones of interest of the Powers'? There were, at that date, no zones of interest. What were 'the limits indicated above'? No geographical limit had been indicated. And what was meant by the expression 'during the course of the war' or even by the word 'occupy'?

Clearly Article 9 of the Treaty of London was open to many interpretations. Yet one interpretation at least was incontrovertible. If France occupied Syria or Great Britain Mesopotamia, then Italy (until the ratification of peace with Turkey) was entitled to claim, and to disembark troops upon, the littoral and hinterland of Adalia. She did.

The third secret treaty was the Anglo-French agreement of May 16, 1916, known as the 'Sykes-Picot Agreement'. This agreement had been concluded for the purpose of reassuring France at a moment when she was suspicious of the Arab revolt which we had organised and sponsored. France imagined that, if the Arabs achieved their independence,

she might be deprived by Great Britain of her secular claim to Syria as well as of her less secular claim to Cilicia or the vilayet of Adana. Sir Mark Sykes,[1] who was entrusted by the British Cabinet with the task of assuaging French anxiety, proved a lavish man. The agreement which he concluded with M. Georges Picot provided that Russia should obtain Erzerum, Van, Bitlis, Trebizond and further territory in Southern Kurdistan: that Great Britain should obtain Mesopotamia: and that France should obtain Syria, the Lebanon, and the vilayet of Adana. The Arab territories south of these areas of partition were to be reserved for an independent Arab Empire, which in its turn was to be divided into French and British zones of influence.

The Sykes-Picot agreement had taken no account of the 'just share' promised to Italy. So soon as the Consulta heard of this agreement they demanded their just share and something more. A conference was held at St. Jean de Maurienne for the purpose of calming Italy's resentment at this secret and unjust exclusion. Great Britain was represented by her Prime Minister and it was in the dining car attached to Mr. Lloyd George's train that many of the crucial negotiations were conducted. By the agreement concluded on April 17, 1917, Italy was promised some 70,000 square miles in Asia Minor including, not Adalia only, but even Smyrna. A vague zone of influence was to stretch northwards as far as Konia.

[1] Sir Mark Sykes, 6th Baronet, b. 1879; Conservative Member for Hull; traveller and Oriental student; during war sent on missions to Egypt and the Arabs; a firm supporter of Arab independence and also of Zionism; exuberant, energetic, impulsive, humorous and slightly irresponsible. Died in Paris, 1919.

By this agreement France and Great Britain were committed to detaching from Turkey, or placing under foreign protection, vast areas of purely Turkish territory inhabited by large majorities of purely Ottoman race.

Fortunately, however, the Treaty of St. Jean de Maurienne contained a preamble. Its first words ran as follows: 'Subject to the consent of Russia.' The Russian Government had no time to give their consent to the agreement before they were displaced by the first wave of revolution. Technically, therefore, the Treaty of St. Jean de Maurienne was null and void. It was, however, extremely difficult for Mr. Lloyd George, who had himself negotiated and signed the treaty, to claim that this technical omission rendered the whole instrument inoperative as regards France and Great Britain. Clearly the agreement left Italy with a strong moral right to the support of her two western Allies in any claim she might advance to the territories which it had originally assigned to her.

The Curzon plan, therefore, was from the very outset rendered difficult of application owing to the fact that the British Government had already concluded treaties which, explicitly or implicitly, pledged them to a policy of partition. However much they might have felt that the ideal solution would be to deprive Turkey of her European territory while preserving as an integral geographical unit her Anatolian homeland, they were under obligation to hand over the south-eastern portion of that homeland to France and the south-western portion to Italy. Had the Turkish problem been either central or isolated, it might have

been possible to induce France and Italy to abate their claims in favour of the simpler and less provocative settlement which Curzon had proposed. But the Turkish problem was not central and was anything but isolated. On other, more vital, issues Mr. Lloyd George was trying at that very moment to obtain concessions from Italy and France. He was trying to induce Clemenceau to give way upon the Polish frontier and in general to modify the harsh terms which French opinion was determined to impose on Germany. He was trying to induce Signor Orlando to surrender in favour of the Jugoslavs large areas of territory promised to him under other articles of the Treaty of London. Not only, therefore, was he unwilling to press his Allies for further self-sacrifice in respect of their Turkish claims, but he hoped to use what still remained of the Ottoman Empire as a pool or reserve from which to compensate them for sacrifices demanded of them in more important areas.

The discrepancy between Curzon and Lloyd George in regard to Turkey was however more fundamental than any temporary difference of opinion. It was caused by a complete divergence in their angle of approach.

Curzon was always a bad European, nor did he consider any territorial or other problems of the continent as comparable in importance to the security of India and its communications. Lloyd George had but small personal acquaintance with Asiatic problems, nor were his emotions engaged by associations which, however romantic in themselves, bore little direct relation to Llanystumdwy. It appeared inconceivable to Curzon that Lloyd George could risk an explosion of pan-

Islamism in India in order to compensate Baron Sonnino for making concessions to Jugo-Slavia over Gradisca or Lussin. It appeared highly irritating to Lloyd George that Curzon should insist so ponderously upon a Turkish settlement the mere suggestion of which would arouse clamour in the Council of Four. Curzon's judgment was fortified by centuries of tradition, by a lifetime of experience, and by knowledge of detail such as no living statesman possessed. Lloyd George's intuition was encouraged by his loathing of the traditional, by his distrust of technical experience, by his marked dislike of all but the most amenable forms of knowledge, by immense self-assurance, and by an aversion to detail which was almost pathological. Through Curzon's mind marched countless memories and reflections—the dim cloud-banks of the Hindu Kush, the ochre sandhills around Herat, the dust and lava of the Wadi Sirhan, what Sir Francis Younghusband had said in 1902, that gorge by which the railway approaches Tiflis, the marshes to the east of Lake Urumiya, the murmuring corridors of El Azhar. Lloyd George's preoccupations were more immediate: what was he to say on Tuesday morning to Orlando about the Istrian frontier, and what to Clemenceau on Thursday about that Polish report? What, above all—if the treaty with Germany were not ready by the second week in April—would be the effect on Mr. Kennedy Jones?[1]

Thus, whereas Curzon considered a 'drastic and decisive' settlement with Turkey as the most urgent of our imperial necessities, Lloyd George regarded

[1] Kennedy Jones, b. 1865; M.P. for Hornsey Division; Lord Northcliffe's representative in the House of Commons; died 1921.

what remained of the Ottoman Empire as the line of least resistance, as an area from which those compensations could be extracted without which a reasonable European settlement would never be achieved.

These two angles of approach were not compatible.



ENCAENIA AT OXFORD: June 1919

Back Row: Professor Pirenne, Admiral Sir Reginald Hall, Dr. Blakiston (Vice Chancellor), The Warden of All Souls.

Front Row: Admiral Sir W. Wemyss, General Sir J. Monash, General Pershing, Marshal Joffre, Lord Curzon (as Chancellor of Oxford), Sir Douglas Haig, Sir David Beatty, Mr. Herbert Hoover, Sir Henry Wilson.

Chapter IV

SMYRNA

May 1919

The Greek zone in Asia Minor as part of a general plan—Mr. Lloyd George's justifications—The advice given him in Paris—How came he to be a philhellene?—E. K. Venizelos—Greece as England's coadjutor in the Eastern Mediterranean—Duality of purpose in British policy towards Turkey—Pan-Islamism and Mr. Edwin Montagu—Lloyd George underestimates Turkish nationalism and Allied loyalty—French suspicions—Italian difficulties—The Smyrna landing of May 15, 1919—Curzon hurries across to Paris and again produces the Curzon plan—He becomes Secretary of State on October 24, 1919—Meanwhile the United States Senate have repudiated Wilson—Effect of this on Allied policy—Curzon again endeavours with French co-operation to impose his plan—It is rejected by the British Cabinet—Curzon's protests and warnings—Misconceptions of the Cabinet—Mustapha Kemal and the first stages of the Nationalist Movement—Kemal escapes from Constantinople and lands in Asia Minor.

I

In the previous chapter the Turkish settlement has been examined in terms of the secret treaties, and with special reference to the partition of Asia Minor into French, Italian and Armenian zones. It was from such an angle that the problem was, in 1919, approached. Viewed from this angle, the Greek zone at Smyrna becomes merely an element in a general scheme. We are apt to-day to forget about the Italian and French zones, even as we forget that in 1919 there seemed a real likelihood that the United States would accept a mandate for Armenia pending the 'recovery' of Russia. We are apt to imagine that the Greek expedition was a purely isolated experiment: it was

not: it was one of four co-ordinated encroachments upon the integrity of Asia Minor.

The legend has arisen also that it was Mr. Lloyd George alone who sent the Greeks to Smyrna. It is contended that he was ignorant of the obvious fact that Greece would never be strong enough by herself to protect a colony established upon the very lip of Asia. He is represented as having acted entirely upon his own initiative, without any study of local conditions, and in defiance of the advice, not only of Lord Curzon, but of all the military and political experts. He is accused of having supported the claims of Greece in frivolous disregard of obvious consequences, and without justification either on ethnographical, political, economic or strategic grounds. And as an explanation of this inexplicable impulse it is averred that he was bewitched by the sorcery of M. Venizelos, and that his final decision was motived by a petty desire to win a trick against the Italians.

This legend contains many overstatements.

In the first place, the proportions of power obtaining at the time when Mr. Lloyd George first came to his decision would, had they been preserved, have rendered Greece fully capable of protecting the frontiers and prosperity of her Ionian colony. The Turkish fleet and armies were not at the time a military menace, and the clauses of the ensuing treaty would secure that they became no menace in the future. Greece, on the other hand, possessed an adequate army, complete command of the Aegean, and a string of islands connecting Smyrna with the Piraeus. An even more important consideration was that the Greeks, once established in Smyrna, would not have had to face the new

Turkey solely on their own resources. The Smyrna territory would not have been isolated. As their immediate neighbours, the Greeks would have had the Italian zone of Adalia, protecting them, not on the east flank only, but also on the north-east. Beyond that would have come the French province of Cilicia, whereas upon the other side of the future Turkey would have been established Armenia, under a United States, and perhaps eventually a Russian, mandate. Moreover, the government of the future Turkey, whether at Constantinople or at Angora, would be under the direct supervision of the Great Powers. Any attack made by Turkey upon the Greek zone at Smyrna would be a violation of the Treaty of Peace, a violation which would bring Turkey into direct opposition not to Greece only but also to Italy, France, Great Britain and even the United States.

It may be felt that such a balance of power should, even in 1919, have been recognised as illusory. If so, then the criticism of Mr. Lloyd George would be, not that he sent the Greeks upon a solitary expedition into Asia Minor, but that he failed to foresee that France would evacuate Cilicia and make a separate peace with Turkey, that Italy would abandon Adalia, that the United States would repudiate all further responsibility, that Russia would join with the Turks, and that the Concert of the Powers would leave Greece isolated, unsupported and alone. In the early months of 1919 it would have been pessimistic indeed to forecast that each of these five eventualities would occur almost simultaneously.

The second accusation against Mr. Lloyd George is that he acted in defiance of all expert advice. It is true,

as was seen in the last chapter, that Curzon was opposed to any partition of Asia Minor and particularly hostile to the Greeks being allowed to land at Smyrna. It is true also that Mr. Edwin Montagu and others were, as will be seen later, anxious to treat the Turks with the greatest solicitude in deference to Moslem opinion in India. It is true that most if not all of the military experts were of opinion that Greece would not, on her own resources, be able indefinitely to protect her Ionian colony against the new Turkey. It is true that the Foreign Office in London agreed with all the above objections. Yet Mr. Lloyd George was not unsupported by the British delegation in Paris. Balfour, though with no abundant conviction, was on his side. So was Eyre Crowe, and so also was Sir Robert Borden. The philhellene sympathies of junior members of the British delegation had also, it is to be feared, a certain influence.[1]

The baleful decision to send the Greeks to Smyrna (a decision which laid a thousand sorrows, not on the Achaians alone, but also upon the Concert of Europe) was not therefore an entirely impulsive gesture but was the perfectly logical sequel of other decisions to which Lloyd George found himself committed and for which he was not in every case himself responsible. If the Armenians of Asia Minor were to be accorded self-determination, if France and Italy were to be allowed to occupy vast provinces in the Anatolian homeland without any ethnical justification, how was

[1] The author of this study was himself attached as an 'expert' to the Greek Committee of the Conference, and was strongly in favour of according to the Greeks a zone in the Smyrna area. His share, small as it was, in this unfortunate decision should be taken into account by the reader in estimating this apologia for Mr. Lloyd George. As a defence it is not entirely impersonal or objective.

it possible to refuse to the Hellenic colonies of the coast a similar privilege of autonomy or to Greece herself the right to protect those colonists?[1] Geographically and climatically the coasts of Asia Minor west of the meridian of Constantinople were wholly Aegean in character, and constituted no organic unit with the uplands behind. Economic safeguards could be enforced to secure that Smyrna remained an emporium and outlet for the trade of the Turkish hinterland. The practical arguments in favour of granting M. Venizelos what he desired were cogent: the difficulties did not then appear insuperable; the emotional considerations were overpowering.

Strange it is, of course, that the fire of philhellenism —that Attic flame—should have been kindled in the Celtic bosom of Great Britain's Prime Minister. What, in fact, was Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba? To him the classical associations which had inspired Lord Guilford or Mr. Gladstone, the scenic and romantic associations which had impelled Lord Byron, might have appeared but as the trappings of those privileged classes which stirred in him the acids of distaste. The quality of Lloyd George's sympathy had, in fact, little to do with the intellectual or emotional indulgences of the cultured philhellene. It was based upon what Lord D'Abernon has called 'his invariable devotion to what he conceived to be the oppressed'.[2] It was based upon his hatred of the Turks, 'that human

[1] The ethnical statistics for the zone accorded to Greece under the Treaty of Sèvres are as follows:

	Greeks	*Turks*	*Others*	*Total*
Greek figures, 1912 - - -	553,000	310,000	91,000	954,500
Turkish figures, 1914- - -	300,000	540,000	44,000	894,000
American figures (*Dr. Magie*), 1914	509,000	470,000	78,000	1,057,000

[2] Lord D'Abernon, *An Ambassador of Peace*, vol. i, p. 38.

cancer', that marauding herd, the only race which in long centuries of opportunity had contributed nothing whatsoever to any branch of human enlightenment or progress. It was based on distrust of the type of person, British or foreign, who with manly complacency proclaims pro-Turkish sympathies. It was based to no small extent upon a crusading emotion, upon a strange survival of feeling regarding the crescent and the cross. And, more immediately, it was based upon a profound confidence in Eleutherios Venizelos.

It would be a mistake to attribute Mr. Lloyd George's admiration for M. Venizelos solely to the tactful solicitations of their common friend Sir John Stavridi.[1] There was M. Venizelos' past record—those early days in the Cretan mountains,his unflagging certainty, the miracle of his success, the brilliant achievements of the first and second Balkan wars. There was his offer in 1914 to occupy for us the Gallipoli peninsula, an offer which, had it been accepted, might have shortened the war by two whole years. There was the long drama of his struggle with autocracy and privilege in the person of King Constantine. There was his self-certainty, his utter reasonableness, the velocity of his mind. 'In asking—', thus writes an opponent of M. Venizelos, 'he always had the air of offering and in obtaining he appeared to be conceding something.'[2] M. Venizelos, in those early days of 1919, seemed always to be helping the Supreme Council out of difficulties. Here, assuredly, was one of the greatest of modern statesmen. He had never

[1] Sir John Stavridi, b. 1867; Greek Consul-General in London, 1903-1916; a close personal friend of M. Venizelos and on terms of long acquaintance with Mr. Lloyd George.

[2] Francesco Nitti, *Peaceless Europe*, English Edition, p. 169.

promised what he could not perform. Upon that rock could the new Ionia, the new Aegean civilisation, be triumphantly based.

It should be added, also, that Mr. Lloyd George's emotions at the time were not exclusively philhellenic: they were also anglophil. He realised that Greece was the only country in Europe which had for a century, and in spite of many disappointments, retained for Great Britain feelings of affection and trust. He knew also that Greece would always desire the friendship and support of the strongest naval Power in the Mediterranean. We could not invariably rely upon the Dardanelles remaining closed to a future Russian fleet. It would thus be of direct British advantage to safeguard our communications with India by placing at a point of immense naval advantage (*i.e.* on the Smyrna-Piraeus line) a country whose benevolent neutrality, or even alliance, would, in time of war, be certainly assured to us.

Looking back to-day, across an intervening gulf of wreckage, towards this point of departure it may appear strange that the road in front could ever have seemed unencumbered or the bridges secure. Havoc and treachery, tempest and betrayal, overwhelmed the venture almost from the start. Its supporters deserted to the enemy, its leaders were deposed, its supplies withdrawn. Only a small remnant struggled onward, and even they in the end lost their audacity and faith. Yet in those early months of 1919 the venture seemed a noble conception glittering in the sunlight of assured success.

Seldom has there been a more tragic illusion.

2

This illusion, as has been indicated, was not based upon a purely frivolous premise. On the one hand, Mr. Lloyd George was already committed to a two-thirds partition of Asia Minor. The remaining third possessed practical advantages which are often disregarded. Nor was his disinclination to accept the Curzon plan motivated solely by his pledges to other Powers or his hopes of a new Aegean civilisation. Other important considerations limited his freedom of judgment. Not all of these considerations can be urged in his defence.

There was the omission, for instance, on the part of the Government for which he was responsible, to formulate any agreed Turkish policy from the start. Lloyd George arrived in Paris with no Cabinet backing on any definite line of policy towards Turkey. It was only after they had reached Paris that the British delegation began to consider—tentatively, sporadically and disjointedly—what in fact should be the policy of the British Empire Delegation in regard to the Turkish problem. It was then that a fundamental divergence of opinion became manifest.

Mr. Lloyd George himself was embarrassed in his decision by certain pre-Armistice pronouncements. On the one hand, Mr. Balfour in his Note to President Wilson of December 18, 1916, had stated as among the British war-aims : ' The setting free of the populations subject to the bloody tyranny of the Turks ; and the turning out of Europe of the Ottoman Empire as decidedly foreign to western civilisation '. On the other hand Mr. Lloyd George himself, on January 5,

1918, had spoken as follows: 'Nor are we fighting to deprive Turkey of its capital, or of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace, which are predominantly Turkish in race. . . .' This was an awkward pronouncement. Did it imply that the rich and renowned lands above cited were in fact predominantly Turkish in race? Or did it imply that we were only fighting to deprive the Ottoman Empire of those sections of those territories which were *not* inhabited by peoples of preponderatingly Turkish nationality? The phrase was equivocal in respect of Thrace and Anatolia. It was unequivocal in respect of Constantinople. It would have been very difficult for Mr. Lloyd George to turn the Turks out of Europe without incurring the charge of inconsistency—a charge to which he was, perhaps unduly, sensitive.

Nor was this his only difficulty. Those who, as Mr. Edwin Montagu, misunderstood the nature of pan-Islamism and the subservience of Oriental psychology to an accomplished fact, brought pressure on Mr. Lloyd George urging him to refrain from disturbing the seat of the Caliphate. Curzon himself, with the force of his experience, dissented from these suggestions, contending rightly that the Caliphate movement was essentially artificial, and that pan-Islamism could be more effectively countered by decisive evidence of Turkish defeat than it could be conciliated by undue subservience to Moslem pressure. When the Caliphate was eventually suppressed by the Ghazi Pasha scarcely a word of protest was raised in India. What the Indian Moslems desired was not so much to rescue the Sultan as to demonstrate their own influence in London on behalf of the soldiers of Islam. Curzon was correct in

thinking that the right manner in which to handle the pan-Islamic agitation was to demonstrate our power, at a point where that power could be rendered decisively effective, and to indicate our clemency at such points where our authority might be difficult to impose. Yet the arguments of Mr. Montagu were at the time more effective.

Both Curzon and Montagu in fact misinterpreted the true nature, on the one hand of Turkish nationalism, and on the other hand of the Caliphate agitation in India. True it was that Islamic feeling was more secretive and more corporate than any similar feeling among the Christian States. True it was that Abdul Hamid, and his successors the Committee of Union and Progress, had, in the guise of pan-Islamism, exploited this corporate feeling for their own ends. True it was also that those who argued from facts such as that the Jehad had failed in 1915, that the Sherif of Mecca had joined the Christian Powers against the Caliph, that Egypt and other subject Moslems had been quiescent during the war, or that Indian Mohammedans had fought against the Turks in Palestine—were attributing to material details an importance which left unaffected the main spiritual impulse. True it was that the Indian Moslems watched with grave anxiety the humiliation of Turkey at the hands of the Western Powers, and used all their influence with the India Office to curb the Christian enthusiasms of Mr. Lloyd George. True it was, also, that all this pressure and agitation was largely artificial and propagandist. Yet the fact remains that both to Edwin Montagu and Lord Curzon the essential discrepancy between Mustapha Kemal and the Khilafat committee in India was not apparent.

Curzon saw in the nationalist revival in Turkey a mere outburst of Ottoman vitality such as had frequently been experienced, and dealt with, in the past. Montagu interpreted the Khilafat agitation as a formidable gesture of sympathy with the New Turkey of Mustapha Kemal. They were both mistaken. The Kemalist revival was nationalist in the European, and not in the Asiatic, sense of the term. It was in fact a movement towards 'westernisation' and, as such, was based on secular and militant considerations and not in the least upon any form of pan-Islamism. Had Curzon realised the Turkish national movement in terms of Greek or Serbian irredentism he would have regarded it as something more intensive and objective than mere religious intransigence. Had Montagu understood that the Khilafat committee bore little relation to the Caliphate, or that Mustapha Kemal was contemptuous of both, he might have refrained from intruding his impulsive idealism upon what, but for him, might have proved a solution acceptable to every party. The new Turkey, in its very essence, was pledged to linguistic nationality and the separation of Church and State. It was essentially tribal and laical and recked little of the emotions and feelings of other Moslems outside the Anatolian plateau. It had no sympathy with the mystic communion, the Moslem solidarity, upon which the Khilafat committee founded its agitation. So far from being anti-Christian, its one desire was to emulate the efficiency and laicism of the successful West. It was both bored and irritated by the orientalism of its Moslem cousins. Curzon underestimated the western efficiency of the new Turkey: Montagu overestimated its Oriental communion with

the Indian Moslems. Neither of them realised that Mustapha Kemal, with dogged clumsiness, was trying to become European. Neither of them realised that this tendency on his part would, if left to itself, sever irremediably the link which connected Turkey with the mystic sentimentalists of the Indian Khilafat committee. Each of them assumed that an important community of interest and feeling existed between the Ottoman Turks and the Indian Moslems. Had they more clearly envisaged the psychology of the new Turkey they would have left it to Kemal to dissolve this mysticism by himself.

There is a further and very curious aspect of Oriental nationalism, as it developed in the years after the war, which must also be recorded. Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan and Egypt were all endeavouring, during those years, to combat, and at the same time to emulate, the West. Russia and India alone were pursuing opposite purposes and endeavouring to orientalise. This obscure contradiction was not realised at the time, and indeed it constituted a most unexpected phenomenon. The full effects of this divergence of tendency will only be realised some thirty years from now. Yet it is a fact as basic to any interpretation of post-war tendencies as it is to any forecast of future developments. It can be stated quite simply. The Asiatic East is tending to become like Europe. European Russia is tending, more and more, to become like pre-war Asia.

Neither Lord Curzon nor yet Mr. Montagu were empiricists. They based their opinions upon what they already knew. And what they knew had, even in its contradictions, ceased to be reality. We cannot blame them for refusing to view the situation in terms

of what must then have seemed fantastic potentialities. Curzon, from the point of view of that India which he had served, desired to deal a final blow at pan-Islamism. Montagu, again from the Indian aspect, wished to conciliate pan-Islamic apprehensions. The former wished to eject the Turk from Constantinople. The latter wished to maintain the Caliph with undiminished prestige. It was Montagu who obtained, or thought he had obtained, his desires.

3

If, therefore, Turkey was to be retained at Constantinople and the Greeks were to be denied all access to Eastern Thrace (for were there not several tombs of several Caliphs at Adrianople?), then Greece must find her compensation elsewhere. That 'elsewhere' could only be supplied by the Smyrna zone.

Hitherto we have been contending that in his main conceptions Mr. Lloyd George, whatever Curzon might say in London, was, if not right, then at least justified in being wrong. A point has now been reached where it must be confessed that his ignorance of local conditions, added to his short experience of diplomacy, led him astray. He did not realise with sufficient force that whereas the Turks would accept with sulky fatalism the administration within their own territory of one of the Great Powers, they would not accept the incorporation of part of that territory within the kingdom of Greece. Having few cultural associations they did not possess for the Romaic race that passionate admiration or affection which is accorded to them by European philhellenes. They looked

upon the Greeks as an inferior and not as a superior population and they felt personally humiliated at being subordinated to what they felt to be a subject race. Mr. Lloyd George, and those who were advising him at the time, did not appreciate the full potency of the affront which was being administered to the apparently impervious dignity of the Turanian race. That was the first mistake.

Mr. Lloyd George's second mistake was to suppose that the French and Italians were as philhellene as he was himself. Had he possessed a longer experience of diplomacy he would have known that the attribution of false motive is one of the main difficulties against which that science has to contend. Inevitably both the French and the Italians imagined that Mr. Lloyd George's exuberant pro-Greek gestures were symptoms of a more definitely selfish policy than actually existed. Inevitably they were jealous of the position of dominance acquired by Great Britain at Constantinople owing to our naval superiority and to the irksome fact that it had been General Allenby, and not Sarrail, who had won the war in the Near East. Inevitably, also, they supposed that Mr. Lloyd George wished to render Greece a vassal State auxiliary in the Aegean to a British domination over the Constantinople Government and the whole future Turkey. These suspicions on their part were greatly exaggerated. Yet they contained a small substratum of truth. And they were confirmed by Mr. Lloyd George's excessive anti-imperialism in districts where French, if not Italian, interests were concerned.

It has already been indicated that the British Government had drifted, over the Arab question, into a posi-

tion which was very false indeed. They had led the Arabs to suppose that they would support, in the event of the defeat of Turkey, the creation of a united Arab empire with its capital at Damascus. They had led the French to suppose, that in a similar event, they were pledged to a partition of that Empire such as would give us Baghdad, and the French Damascus. It has often been stated that we failed to inform the French of our engagements to the Arabs or the Arabs of our engagements to the French. This is not strictly accurate. Such information had been given, although in a vague and affable manner. Yet the fact remains that, when Mr. Lloyd George argued that since Allenby had been the liberator of Syria the future of that country could not be determined on the lines of the Sykes-Picot agreement, M. Clemenceau became, not only suspicious, but violently enraged. President Wilson was able at the moment to sidetrack this controversy by sending out Mr. King and Mr. Crane upon a mission of enquiry. Yet it rankled none the less. And from that moment the French began to attribute to Mr. Lloyd George and the British Government eastern ambitions which they did not, in any very conscious manner, possess. Those ambitions were symbolised by the word 'Greece'; and the national claims of that deserving little country thus became identified in the minds of the French Colonial party with a desire on the part of the British Government to cheat them of the richest spoils of war.

In dealing with Italy Mr. Lloyd George, and from the best motives, also drifted into an equivocal position. Under the Treaty of London he was pledged to support their claim to Dalmatia: under the agree-

ment of St. Jean de Maurienne it was awkward for him to resist their claim to Smyrna. In the early stages of the Conference he had been able, with charming evasiveness, to throw upon President Wilson the brunt of the controversy. As a result MM. Orlando[1] and Sonnino[2] had left Paris indignantly on April 24. When they returned on May 5, Mr. Lloyd George himself endeavoured, and perhaps unfortunately, to achieve an Adriatic agreement. He endeavoured to induce the Italians to surrender their claim to Fiume and the Jugoslav littoral of the Adriatic by offering them 'compensations' elsewhere. He also endeavoured to induce them to abandon their claim to Smyrna by dangling before their eyes such fantastic baits as a Caucasian mandate and the coal-mines of Eregli. He further diminished both their confidence and their enthusiasm by suggesting that they should surrender Rhodes and the other Dodecanese islands to the Greeks. And when, towards the middle of May, the Italians showed signs of anticipating these favours and themselves sending a battleship to Smyrna, he encouraged M. Venizelos to forestall such action and to disembark Greek troops upon the coast of Asia Minor. The Greek disembarkation at Smyrna took place on May 15, 1919. It was accompanied by acts of indiscipline and brutality. On May 18 Lord Curzon, accompanied by other members of the Cabinet, crossed in alarm and indignation to Paris. A meeting

[1] Orlando, Vittorio Emanuele, b. 1860. Italian Prime Minister October 1917-June 1919. First Italian delegate to the Paris Peace Conference. A white, weak, flabby man.

[2] Sonnino, Sidney, b. 1847. Prime Minister 1909-1910. Foreign Secretary November 1914-June 1919. An obstinate and indignant man. Scotch mother.

took place at the Rue Nitot early on the following day.

Lord Curzon, on that occasion, expressed his deep disapproval of the decision to allow the Greeks to establish a zone in Asia Minor. He recognised, however, that since they had now been disembarked it would be difficult to recall them. He urged only that they should not be allowed to occupy more territory than they could, with their own resources, defend. At the same time he reverted to his original plan and urged that the Turks should be expelled from Europe. This, perhaps, was an excessive suggestion. Once the Greeks had been landed at Smyrna it became imperative to soothe Turkish opinion by concessions at Constantinople. Curzon failed to realise this necessity in time. Lord Milner and Mr. Montagu were in favour of not disturbing the Turks any further. Mr. Winston Churchill wished to see Constantinople subjected to international administration, under the chairmanship of the United States. A. J. Balfour evolved a scheme for placing Turkey under foreign advisers, with vague zones of influence. Mr. Lloyd George kept his own counsel and listened to what was being said. The Cabinet, at that, returned to London.

4

In the weeks that followed, both the Greeks and the Italians enlarged the area of their occupation. Curzon became uneasy. On June 20, 1919, he addressed to Mr. Balfour the following important despatch:

'SIR,

On grounds of public policy I have been a good deal disturbed at the continuous and as yet unarrested

advance of the Italian and Greek forces in the western parts of the Turkish dominions in Asia Minor, and I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement from such information as is available in the Foreign Office of the extent to which that advance has so far in each of the two cases been pursued. Though these movements were in part undertaken in the first instance with the knowledge, and in the case of the Greeks with the sanction, of the Allied Powers at Paris, they appear to be continued in their later stages, so far as is known here, with no similar authority, and in open disregard of the principle, laid down in the early days of the Paris Conference, that its ultimate decisions should not be prejudiced by premature and aggressive action in respect of the occupation of territory by any of the interested States or Powers. Moreover, in the case of the Greeks in particular, they are alleged to have been accompanied by scenes of discreditable and unprovoked outrage.

I am the more concerned at the occurrence of this twofold penetration because it is apparently being prosecuted without interference or protest (save from the Turks) at a time when the importance of retaining at least some portion of the Turkish sovereignty and of the former Turkish dominions in Asia is reported to have received a somewhat tardy recognition at the hands of the Allied Powers, although it must be clear that the realisation of any such policy will be seriously compromised by the presence in the regions affected of the forces of two States whose ulterior intentions so small an attempt is made to conceal. A further disquieting symptom is the constant recurrence of warnings from our representatives at Constantinople of the consequences that must ensue from these continued encroachments upon what remains of Turkish sovereignty in Asia, and the likelihood that this part of the Middle East will thereby be plunged into a state of renewed and, in all probability, protracted violence and disorder. The further these advances, whether of Greeks or

of Italians, are pushed, the greater becomes the difficulty of withdrawal, and the more inevitable the prospect of future strife, if not of serious bloodshed.

In the various appreciations that reach the Foreign Office of the policy that is now being pursued with regard to Turkey, I cannot find any voice that welcomes or indeed defends these encroachments. And yet the persistence of the actors appears successfully to effect what the considered judgment of the spectators declines to approve.

I have ventured to submit this representation, not as a protest, which I cannot but feel will be useless, but with a view to ascertaining whether it is in contemplation to place any limit to the extension of these advances, and whether there is any ground for regarding them as provisional in character and duration. I shall be very grateful for any information that you may be able to give me on these points.

I have, etc.
CURZON OF KEDLESTON.'

As a matter of fact a telegram had been despatched by Mr. Lloyd George after the meeting of May 19 urging the Greeks not to advance beyond the Sandjak of Smyrna and the Caza of Aivali. Moreover, on the day before the date of this despatch, the Orlando Cabinet had resigned. Signor Nitti,[1] the successor of Signor Orlando, was not inclined for further adventures. From the first moment he abandoned the Caucasian scheme and with great rapidity he withdrew Italian troops from the Adalia region. Lord Curzon's despatch was thus a trifle belated, yet he chafed at the absence of any definite response. Dumbly the Su-

[1] Nitti, Francesco, b. 1868. Minister of Treasury under Orlando whom he succeeded as Prime Minister in June 1919. He regarded himself as the Lloyd George of Italy, but this view was not shared by his countrymen, who replaced him by Giolitti in June 1920.

preme Council drifted on to what was shaping as the Treaty of Sèvres. Curzon was in despair. 'A. J. B.', he wrote to Lady Curzon on August 19, 'is in Paris pursuing one policy. I am here pursuing another. A. J. B. wants to have a holiday and me to take his place. I have declined. No one knows what ought to be done and meanwhile, of course, nothing is done and we go on getting deeper and deeper into the mire. Oh! how I long to get away and have a rest.' Three weeks later we find him writing as follows: 'I am heartily sick of this indeterminate position, possessing full powers in one set of things but powerless in others; pursuing a definite policy here which may be thrown over any day in Paris. Few can realise the unsatisfactory and almost humiliating position of being at the same time Secretary of State and yet only a substitute.' Yet two days after this there is a more hopeful note. On September 11 A. J. Balfour had come to London from Paris and dined with Curzon at Carlton House Terrace. He stated that he would not return either to the Foreign Office or to Paris. 'He realises', wrote Curzon to his wife, 'that this half-and-half arrangement is hard on me.'

On October 24, 1919, A. J. Balfour resigned his seals as Foreign Secretary. Lord Curzon, with full titular powers, was appointed in his place.

5

In the interval between the Greek landing at Smyrna on May 15, 1919, and Curzon's appointment as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs an event occurred which profoundly modified the proportions of the Turkish, as well as of every other, settlement.

On July 10 President Wilson submitted the Treaty of Versailles for the ratification of the United States Senate. It at once became apparent that the opposition engineered by Senator Lodge on behalf of the Republicans, by Senator G. M. Hitchcock on behalf of the Democrats, and by Senator Borah on behalf of the irreconcilables, was more formidable than the most confirmed pessimist had ever supposed. Mr. Wilson appealed to the country over the heads of Congress, and while speaking in Colorado was struck down by a paralytic stroke. Immured as an invalid in the White House he ceased from that moment to exercise any influence on American or world affairs. It was obvious to all that American opinion, disillusioned by the war, desired only to return to 'normalcy' and to be rid of all external entanglements. There was thus no prospect whatever that America would assume any responsibility either for Armenia or for Constantinople.

The effect of America's repudiation both of Wilson and of Europe was twofold. On the one hand the loss of the physical and moral support of this mighty Associate diminished the power and prestige of the Allied Coalition. On the other hand the collapse of Wilsonism, tragic though it seemed at the moment, did in fact offer an occasion to revise Coalition policy upon a basis of greater realism. Curzon was not slow to grasp that occasion.

In November M. Pichon, the French Foreign Minister, paid a visit to London. He showed a ready inclination to enter into discussions with Lord Curzon on the basis of a revision of the whole Near Eastern settlement. Curzon, with the assent of Lloyd George, struck while the iron was still hot. The sagacious

M. Berthelot,[1] the resourceful M. Kammerer,[2] were summoned to London and elaborated with Mr. Robert Vansittart and Mr. Forbes Adam of the Foreign Office a scheme for an Anglo-French settlement which, in its broad lines, was similar to that conceived by Curzon in January of 1918 and urged by him upon the Cabinet in his memorandum of a year later. M. Clemenceau himself crossed the channel and was eventually persuaded to agree to a simplification of the whole Turkish settlement on the basis of the ejection of the Turk from Europe, the placing of Constantinople and the Straits in the charge of some international organisation, and the maintenance, subject to zones of influence and foreign advisers, of Turkish sovereignty over the Anatolian homeland. It seemed as if all the errors of the last ten months were at last to be repaired. Curzon, secure in his office, beamed delighted at this triumph of experience over improvisation.

Yet at the eleventh hour that evil destiny which appears throughout to have brooded over the Eastern Question intervened in unexpected form. Mr. Edwin Montagu, who was profoundly convinced that the ejection of the Turk from Europe would lead to an explosion of Moslem feeling in India and even in Egypt, had succeeded in the interval in winning over a majority of his Cabinet colleagues to this point of view. The Anglo-French scheme, the original 'Curzon plan'

[1] M. Philippe Berthelot, b. 1866; the youngest of the gifted and influential Berthelot brothers; Secretary-General of the Quai d'Orsay, 1920; incurred hostility of the Chamber by his brilliance and integrity; a man of great diplomatic ability, and of wide culture. Now retired with rank of Ambassador.

[2] M. Albert Kammerer, b. 1875; Sous-Directeur of Asiatic Affairs at Quai d'Orsay; since then French Representative on the Egyptian Commission de la Dette.

in modified form, was submitted to the Cabinet on January 6, 1920. It was supported by Curzon, Balfour and Lloyd George. By a majority of the Cabinet it was rejected. Curzon returned to the Foreign Office in a mood of angered despair. He sat down and wrote a protest:

'I ask to place on record my earnest and emphatic dissent from the decision arrived at by the majority of the Cabinet yesterday—in opposition to the advice of the Prime Minister and two successive Foreign Secretaries—to retain the Turk in Constantinople. I believe this to be a short-sighted and, in the long run, a most unfortunate decision.

'In order to avoid trouble in India—largely manufactured and in any case ephemeral—and to render our task in Egypt less difficult—its difficulty being in reality almost entirely independent of what we may do or not do at Constantinople—we are losing an opportunity for which Europe has waited nearly five centuries, and which may not recur. The idea of a respectable and docile Turkish Government at Constantinople, preserved from its hereditary vices by a military cordon of the Powers—including, be it remembered, a permanent British garrison of 10,000 to 15,000 men—is in my judgment a chimera. Nor will it be found that the decision, if carried into effect in Paris, will either solve the Turkish problem or calm the Eastern world.

'The Turk at Constantinople must have very different measure meted out to him from the Turk at Konia. He will retain a sovereignty which will have to be a mere simulacrum, and those who have saved him will, unless I am mistaken, presently discover, that his rescue has neither satisfied him nor pacified Islam. But beyond all I regret that the main object for which the war in the East was fought and the sacrifice of Gallipoli endured—namely the liberation of Europe from the Ottoman Turk—has after

an almost incredible expenditure of life and treasure been thrown away in the very hour when it has been obtained, and that we shall have left to our descendants—who knows after how much further sacrifice and suffering?—a task from which we have flinched.

'I may add that the refusal of the Cabinet to endorse the scheme prepared by M. Berthelot and myself was resolved on without any consideration by them of what the rival scheme will be, i.e. a Turkish State still centred at Constantinople but under international supervision. When produced it may cause some surprise.'

In this last sentence Curzon placed his finger upon what, in effect, was the main delusion from which his Cabinet colleagues were suffering. Ignorant as they were of Turkish history and psychology, they interpreted the problem in terms which might well have been applicable to some civilised or sensitive community, but which were not applicable to a lower type of organism such as the Ottoman Empire. Mesmerised as they were by the glamour which Constantinople and the Straits had acquired in two centuries of European history, they failed to understand that the problem had now become an Asiatic problem, of which Constantinople was not the centre but a mere point upon the outer periphery. They imagined that by their physical occupation of the capital—of the seat of the Caliph and his Government—they held within their grasp the vital organs of the whole Turkish State. They failed to understand that the Turk, as the Lernean hydra, was independent of such organs, or that the vitality of the Ottoman was still as unlocalised as that of Ertoghrul's nomadic horde.

Curzon himself was subject to no such delusions. He knew that Turkey possessed nine heads, of which

one, perhaps, was immortal. He knew that the occupation of Constantinople, the presence of three dreadnoughts in the Golden Horn, would have no effect at all at Sivas or Karahissar. He knew that without Russian assistance the Allies, in view of the state of their public opinion at home, would have no prospect of enforcing their authority in the Eastern vilayets. He knew that a Sultan and Government ruling in a different continent from that in which the race-consciousness of the Ottoman Turk was now concentrated, subservient to the Allied forces of occupation, would within a few weeks lose all respect and all reality. He knew also that it was a grave diplomatic fallacy to suppose that the three Powers would, even for a month or two, remain loyal or united in imposing upon the Turks an agreed policy of settlement. And he foresaw that their basic misconceptions would before long expose those colleagues who had rejected his advice to 'some surprise'.

That surprise took the highly inconvenient form of the Turkish Nationalist Movement.

6

It is beyond the range of this study to give any detailed estimate of the career, personality or achievements of Mustapha Kemal. His biography is typically Young Turk. An Albanian origin: a squalid childhood in the Turkish quarter of Salonika where his father was a clerk in the Debt Administration: the cadet school: the military college at Monastir: affiliation with political societies such as the Vatan and the Committee of Union and Progress: consequent persecution and arrest by Abdul Hamid: the opportun-

ities offered by the Young Turk revolution, the Tripoli war and the two Balkan wars: a period as Military Attaché at Sofia: the Great War and his command of the Anafarta section on the Gallipoli peninsula: Chief of the Staff to Liman von Sanders[1] in Syria: the rout of the Turkish armies: Armistice: recalled to Constantinople: a bedroom in the Pera Palace Hotel and petty plottings against the forces of occupation: such features are common to the life-histories of many Young Turks who achieved prominence between 1908 and 1918.

What distinguishes the biography of Mustapha Kemal from those of other eminent Ottomans is that he owed his immense good fortune, not to the friendships which he had been able to conciliate, but to the enmities which he had aroused. He quarrelled in 1912 with the leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress—with Enver, Talaat, Djemal, and Djavid. He quarrelled in 1917 with the German generals and staff officers who were endeavouring to direct the Turkish armies. These quarrels, in 1919, were of the greatest value to him. They deflected from him those suspicions which the Sultan, the Government of Damad Ferid, and above all the occupying Powers, would otherwise have felt. And they thus gave him an opportunity which was fateful indeed.

The armistice of Mudros, concluded in the Admiral's cabin of H.M.S. *Agamemnon* on October 30, 1918, was not a scientific document. Its twenty-five

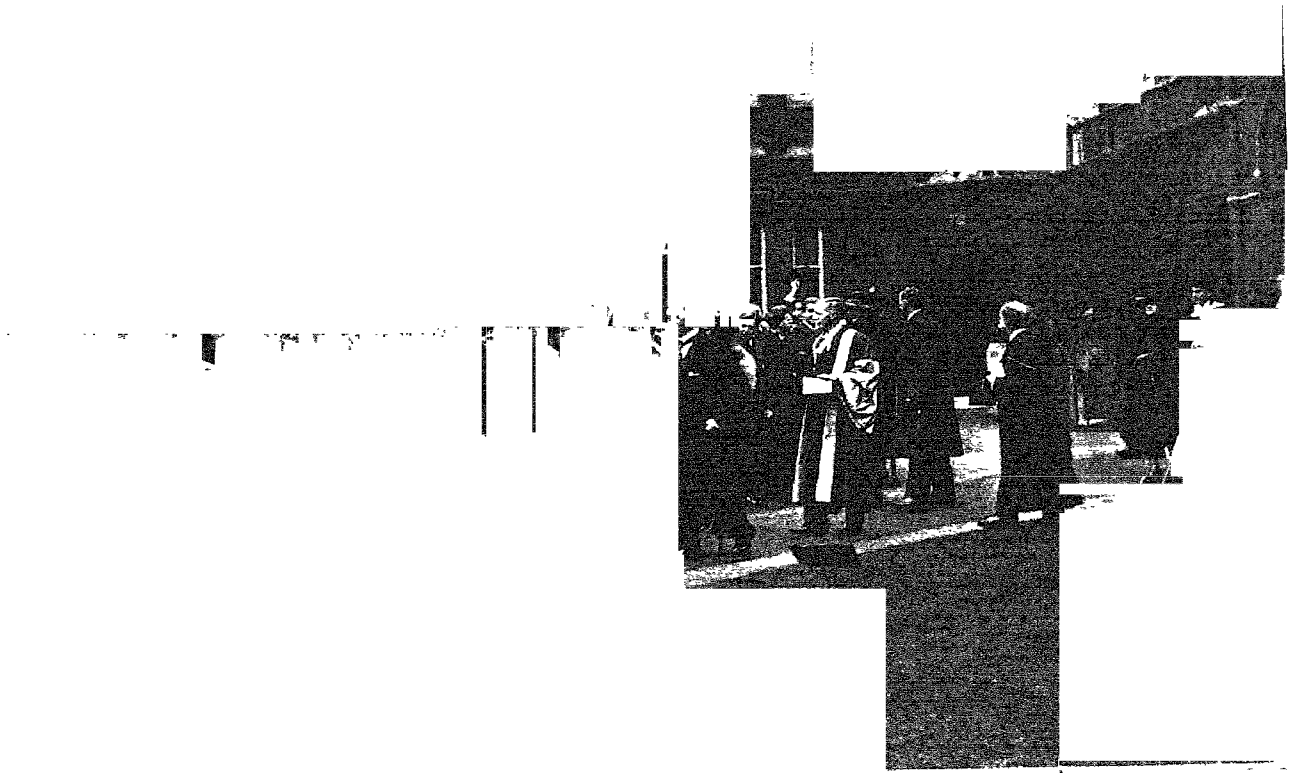
[1] Liman von Sanders, b. 1855. In 1913 appointed to reorganise Turkish army and creates international incident by at the same time accepting command of First Turkish Army Corps stationed at Constantinople. In March 1915 in command at Gallipoli, and in 1918 defeated by Allenby in Palestine. A heavy Prussian type, sensitive and silent.

clauses may strike us as breezy to-day, haphazard and optimistic. They contained no precise stipulations regarding the disarmament of Turkey, providing only for the 'demobilisation' of her forces and 'compliance with such orders' as might subsequently be given regarding the surrender of arms, ammunition and equipment. The execution of these orders was placed under the supervision of a handful of Allied control officers scattered pitifully across Anatolia. It soon became apparent that troops were not being demobilised and arms were not being surrendered. In particular Kiazim Kara Bekir Pasha refused to disband his six divisions on the Caucasus frontier, and from every town in Asia Minor came reports that the old Committee of Union lodges were reopening, and that resistance was being prepared.

The Allied Governments, desiring to nip this movement in the bud, instructed their High Commissioners at Constantinople to make urgent representations to the Turkish Government. The Grand Vizier, Damad Ferid Pasha, replied that the local garrisons were inclined to ignore written orders from the capital and that the only hope was to send a person of authority on a special mission to enforce compliance with the terms of the armistice. He suggested Mustapha Kemal for this appointment, urging as a recommendation his well-known antipathy to the Committee of Union and Progress and the anti-German attitude which he had adopted during the war. The High Commissioners at first agreed, but subsequently informed Damad Ferid that information in their possession suggested that Mustapha Kemal would not in fact be worthy of their confidence. Meanwhile, however, Kemal, in his bed-

room at the Pera Palace, had received notification of his appointment. His friend Ismet Bey, Under-Secretary at the War Office, accompanied this intimation with a hint that he had better leave for Asia Minor before Damad Ferid and the Powers changed their minds. He packed hurriedly and embarked upon a steamer leaving that night for the Black Sea. An order had in the interval been issued for his arrest and deportation to Malta. Kemal landed at Samsun on May 19, 1919, at a moment when the Greek armies were still disembarking upon the quayside at Smyrna. The Sultan was induced to telegraph recalling him immediately to Contantinople. He refused to comply. Kiazim Kara Bekir Pasha was then instructed to arrest him. The news of the Greek landing and its accompanying outrages had by then spread throughout Asia Minor. Instead of arresting Kemal, Kiazim Pasha promised him support. A conference was summoned at Sivas, and a crusade of national resistance was proclaimed.

At that moment, in Paris, the Allies were celebrating the signature of the Treaty of Versailles.



LORD CURZON CONDUCTS HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
THROUGH BALLIOL COLLEGE, May 1921

Chapter V

PERSIA

January 1919-*July* 1921

Curzon's personal identification with the Persian problem—His dream of a chain of buffer States protecting India—His dread of Russian infiltration and his early schemes of an Anglo-Persian alliance—In 1919 *these schemes seem realisable—His recognition of existing difficulties and in particular of Asiatic nationalism—The effect of his experience upon his judgment—As instanced by his preconceptions regarding the Persian problem and the frame of mind in which he approached it in* 1919 *—He thus exaggerates Persian fear of Russia and Persian love of England—He is authorised by the Cabinet to open negotiations with Persia—Mr. Montagu dissents—Persia and the Peace Conference—The negotiations with Vossuq-ed-Dowleh and the resultant Anglo-Persian Agreement of August* 9, 1919*—Curzon's triumph—The growth of Persian opposition—The question of ratification—The increase in Russian prestige and the decline in British prestige—The Anglo-Persian Agreement at first shelved and then denounced—Curzon's funeral oration—The new Persia and Reza Shah Pahlevi.*

I

In the last two chapters an attempt has been made to describe the elements of the Turkish problem and to suggest those moods of optimism, jealousy, drift, ignorance and improvisation in which it was approached by the British Cabinet and by the Supreme Council in Paris. This account has covered the period from the armistice of Mudros of October 30, 1918, to the final rejection of the Curzon plan on January 6, 1920. The decisions taken during that period by Lloyd George and Balfour were taken without previous consultation with Curzon, and often against his categorical advice. He remained (at least until

October 1919) in a subservient position and was unable to enforce his views with substantive authority. Throughout the long drama of Asia Minor he possessed (and made full use of) an incontestable alibi. He can thus be absolved from all direct responsibility for the misfortunes which followed.

There was one subject, however, which, during that year 1919, was left entirely in Curzon's hands. It was the subject of Persia. In this, almost, he achieved the most startling of diplomatic victories. Yet fate reserved for him in this Persian question the most galling, because the most personal, of his many diplomatic defeats.

Curzon was drawn to Persia by every fibre of his faith and temperament. It has already been observed that he was apt to overestimate the importance of those problems with which he was personally identified. His identification with Persia dated from his arduous voyage of 1889 and had been preserved by the fact that Curzon's *Persia* remained (and will for long remain) the classic authority upon that stone-strewn Empire. Among the many evidences of his disproportionate concentration upon the Persian problem a single quotation will suffice. 'If only', he wrote in 1899, 'I could transfer a little of the misplaced anxiety about the Transvaal to Persia and the Persian Gulf!' Such an opinion, enunciated upon the eve of the Boer War, may suggest an egoistic angle of approach. That angle existed: yet a phenomenon familiar to all those who have travelled or have lived in Persia is that their minds remain for ever haunted by those plains of amber, those peaks of amethyst, the dignity of that crumbled magnificence, that silence of

two thousand years. As a romanticist, and not only as an egoist, Curzon could not remain immune to such persuasive associations.

Essentially, however, his constant preoccupation with Persia arose from the 'main love' of his political life, was centred on his Indian obsession. 'As the years roll by', he had said, 'the call seems to me more imperative, the work more majestic, the goal more sublime. . . . To me the message is carved in granite, it is hewn out of the rock of doom—that our work is righteous and that it will endure.'[1] Always he had dreamt of creating a chain of vassal states stretching from the Mediterranean to the Pamirs and protecting, not the Indian frontiers merely, but our communications with our further Empire. It seemed in those early months of 1919 that this dream was about to be realised and that Providence had vouchsafed to him, in the evening of his life, the privilege of conferring one final benefit upon the India which he had served so lovingly, although with such unthankful recompense.

This opportunity, this undreamt occasion, had now arrived. The obstructions which in the past had impeded any perfect design for the defence of India and the Empire had suddenly and completely been removed. Those former encumbrances—the entente with Russia, the fear of Germany, the doctrine of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire—had been swept aside by earthquake and by fire. The ground had at last been cleared for the complete, the final, the perfected plan. And he himself—the ideal architect of such a reconstruction—was there; untrammelled, dominant, equipped. It was with radiant assurance,

[1] Guildhall Speech, 1904.

with almost gluttonous energy, with religious fervour, that he applied himself to his task.

2

In this chain of buffer states stretching between India and all European interference, Persia was to him at once the weakest and the most vital link. 'The integrity of Persia', he had written, 'must be registered as a cardinal precept of our Imperial creed.'[1] He believed profoundly in Russia's 'Schlieffen plan'—in General Kuropatkin's scheme of 1885 for the invasion of India via both the Gulf and Khorasan. To him it appeared 'narrow and erroneous' to contend that the Persian Gulf was anything but a vital British interest. Addressing the Trucial Chiefs at Shargah on November 21, 1903, he had warned them that 'the peace of these waters must still be maintained; your independence will continue to be upheld; and the influence of the British Government will remain supreme'. And five years later, in protesting in the House of Lords against the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907, he had expressed the view that the real strategical danger to India lay in the direction of the Persian Gulf.

His aim was not, however, acquisitive. He did not wish to include Persia, or any portion of Persia, within the British or the Indian Empires. Nor was he in favour of the policy of demoralisation by bribes, subsidies and inducements—'the rupee policy of Malcolm and his immediate successors, who, where they thought to attach, did but degrade'. So long ago as 1890 he had defined the ideal policy of Great Britain in Persia as one which, 'by dint of a friendly alliance, by

[1] Curzon's *Persia*, vol. ii, p. 605.

the exercise of prudent advice, by the encouragement of the flow of capital eastwards and by its application to purposes of ascertained stability, having for their object the reinvigoration of the country', would 'help to place Persia in a position which may render the hostile schemes of her neighbours, if not impossible, at least precarious'.[1] British ascendancy, it was true, would have to be established south of a line running from Seistan to Kermanshah, via Kerman, Yezd, Ispahan and Hamadan. Yet within that line Great Britain 'claims no exclusive privileges, exercises no dictation, and employs no threats. She will not require to move a soldier; she need never fire a gun. . . . Any future triumphs which we may gain in Persia will be won, not by powder and shot, not by bluster and bullying, not even by bribes, but by the amicable stress of common interests, working in the direction of industrial development and domestic reform'.[2]

Such was his opinion of Anglo-Persian relations as they should have been created in 1889. It was an advanced, a liberal, opinion. To this opinion he adhered consistently. We find him, as late as November 16, 1920, enunciating the same doctrine—'A peaceful Persia, a stable Persia, a friendly Persia, an independent Persia have been the corner stones of British policy'. It appeared, in those early months of 1919, that these corner stones could at last be embedded in the concrete of circumstance. He tried to rivet these circumstances. Yet here again there was illusion.

It has frequently been stated that in his handling of the Persian problem Lord Curzon was unduly optimistic and out of touch with recent changes in the psy-

[1] Curzon's *Persia*, vol. ii, p. 620. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 621.

chology of the East. This criticism is exaggerated. In the first place he was not in the least optimistic. 'The world', he wrote to Lord Lansdowne in September 1919, 'is very troubled and, while peace is supposed to be secured, active and murderous warfare is going on in at least a quarter of the recent areas of struggle. And, if this is the case in Europe, the situation in Asia is worse and will not subside for a generation. In these circumstances the task of government is full of incident but even fuller of disappointment and perplexity'. Nor was he in the least unaware of the changes which had during his own lifetime taken place in the attitude of the East towards the West. 'What', he had written while still in India, 'is the great difference in the end? It is that public opinion is growing all the while, is articulate, is daily becoming powerful, cannot be ignored. What is the origin of the mistakes sometimes made at the other end? It is that men are standing still with their eyes shut and do not see the movement here.' So long ago as 1890 he had realised the difficulty inherent in all imperialism by consent. 'The normal Asiatic', he had then written, 'would sooner be misgoverned by Asiatics, than well governed by Europeans.'[1] Since 1890, moreover, an event of vast importance had occurred to undermine the fatalistic acquiescence of Oriental peoples in the dominance of the West. Japan in 1905 had completely defeated Russia in warfare both on land and sea. The impression created throughout the East by this victory of an Asiatic over a European Power was revolutionary. Curzon was not the man to underestimate the consequences of that impression. He was well aware

[1] Curzon's *Persia*, vol. ii, p. 630.

that since that date the West had lost much of its self-confidence; that the East had acquired a disbelief in the inevitability of their own subservience.

3

The errors committed by Curzon in his handling of the Persian problem were not, therefore, due to any ignorance or disregard of recent changes in Asiatic psychology. They were due, rather, to the circumstance that his knowledge of detail intervened to obstruct his general perspective. Again and again in examining Curzon's statesmanship we are confronted by this curious phenomenon. Again and again do we find his memory getting in the way of his judgment. In estimating his miscalculation of chances it is thus necessary to record those factors which loomed obstructively in his memory on that January of 1919.

Lord Curzon's recollections of the Central Asian question dated back to the 'spontaneous infiltration' of Russia, the occupations of Khiva, Bokhara and Samarkand, the seizure of the Merv oasis in 1884, and the Panjdeh crisis of March 1885. During his own visit to Persia in 1889 he had observed the pathetic anxiety with which a man as virile as Nasr-ed-Din Shah regarded Russian infiltration; he had deeply regretted at the time the unwillingness of the British Government to complicate their relations with Russia by any gesture which might enable Persia to stem the encroaching tide. He had learnt that the Persian people looked to the British Empire as their sole protection against a fate similar to that which had overwhelmed their comrades of the Oxus basin. He regarded the

Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 as a sacrifice of our Asiatic tradition to the needs of European diplomacy, as a betrayal of that confidence which the Persians had for half a century reposed in British friendship. He emerged from his retirement to protest against that Convention. 'I do not think', he said, 'that this treaty, in its Persian aspect, will conduce either to the security of India, to the independence of Persia, or to the peace of Asia.'[1] And in so prophesying, Curzon was correct.

The Anglo-Russian Convention had in fact been concluded solely in the interests of the European balance of power. The increasing menace of Germany both by land and sea had led the British Cabinet to question whether the Anglo-French Entente and the Franco-Russian Alliance constituted a counterbalance of sufficient weight to deter Germany from menacing adventures. It was decided that they must be supplemented and cemented by an Anglo-Russian entente. For this purpose negotiations were opened in St. Petersburg having as their object the removal of existent causes of friction between Great Britain and Russia. Among these causes of friction was the Persian problem. It was agreed that Persia should be divided into three zones. In the northern zone Great Britain would no longer oppose Russian interests, whereas in the southern zone British influence would not meet with any opposition on the part of Russia. Between these two zones a neutral area was created in which, by implication, both Powers would refrain from infiltration. The preamble to this Convention provided that Great Britain and Russia 'mutually

[1] Curzon in the House of Lords, February 6, 1908.

agreed to respect the integrity and independence of Persia'.

Curzon realised, and stated at the time, that not only would this Convention be regarded by Persian and by foreign opinion as a disguised partition of the country, but that Russia would not for one moment abide by the self-denying ordinance embodied in the preamble. He was correct in this surmise. Not only did Russia treat the northern zone, including the capital, as a Russian protectorate, but in the Potsdam Agreement of 1911 she came to an understanding with Germany under which the future railway system of northern Persia would be linked with the Baghdad Railway at Khanikin. In vain did the British Government protest against such violations of the Convention; in vain did they assure the Persians that London would induce St. Petersburg to abide by the preamble. The Persians remained unconvinced, and when the Russians bombarded the shrine of the Iman Reza at Meshed their confidence in the authority and good faith of the British Government entered upon a rapid decline. This decline was accelerated when, in November 1917, the Bolshevik Government published the terms of the secret treaty known as the 'Constantinople Agreement of March 18, 1915'.[1] Under this treaty Russia was promised Constantinople and Great Britain was to be allowed in return to incorporate within her sphere of influence in Persia the whole neutral or intermediate zone established under the Convention of 1907. As a corollary to this the Russians were, in the northern zone, to have 'their full liberty of action'. Until the publication of this agreement it might have been pos-

[1] See p. 83.

sible for the friends of England in Persia to contend that we had been driven into the 1907 Convention by European necessities, and that we had since then endeavoured, feebly but honourably, to maintain the independence of Persia against Russian encroachment. After the publication of that Agreement even the most ardent anglophil was unable to deny that we had surrendered to Russian realism in admitting the principle of a partition of Persian territory.

In remembering all this—in remaining acutely aware of his own protests, writings and speeches from 1889 onwards—Curzon supposed that a similar acuity of recollection and awareness lived in the heart of every Persian. It never dawned upon him that the name of Curzon in Persia was anything but a household word. He had been right in all his prophecies: the other people had been wrong. Accuracy had always, since the days of Mr. Dunbar, been a virtue to which he attributed miraculous efficacy. It was beyond his powers of detachment to conceive that this correctness of prevision did not place him in a unique personal relation to the whole Persian problem. He had always, and with full sincerity, been in favour of Persian independence and integrity. He had always, and sometimes out of season, been the enemy of Russian infiltration into Central Asia. It seemed incredible to him that the Persians could fail to recognise in him their constant, their lordly, their disinterested and their inspired friend.

In basing his policy upon these quite accurate memories—these seemingly justified expectations—he was blinded to what, in 1919, was an essential factor in the situation. The rôles had been reversed. No longer

was Russia regarded as the enemy and Great Britain as the well-meaning, if slightly impotent, friend. It was the British of whom the Persians were now frightened. It was to Moscow that, with timid doubt and sly expectancy, they looked for consolation. Curzon relied, in dealing with Persia, on what he called 'the amicable stress of common interests'. He failed to observe that in 1919 those interests were no longer shared or amicable. He failed to observe that, from the moment of the Bolshevik Revolution, the stress of the Russian danger had, at least in Persian eyes, been relaxed.

4

Nor was this all. Persia, during the war, had been exposed to violations and sufferings not endured by any other neutral country. In the earlier stages of the war the Turks, and then the Russians, had been mainly responsible for rendering Persian territory an area of hostilities. The British were dragged into the business mainly against their will. Yet after the Russian retirement in 1917 the British alone were left in occupation, and upon them alone fell the full force of Persian indignation.

It is beyond the scope of this study to tell the story of those stages by which the British Government were forced to arm Persian levies and to violate Persian neutrality by sending troops into the country. It is sufficient to state that in the north the Turks were the first to cross the Persian border and were at once countered by Russian troops. Our own intervention in the south was provoked by the disturbances and outrages organised by German residents and agents. The enterprise of such men as Wassmuss, Zugmayer, and

Niedermayer; the slow stages by which they suborned the Persian gendarmerie (at that time commanded by Swedish officers) and finally created in Fars and Arabistan a state of civil war; the feats of energy, ingenuity and daring which these men performed; constitute some of the most fascinating pages in the history of the minor operations of the war.[1] Marshal von der Goltz [2] himself visited Kermanshah in February of 1916. He summed up the situation as follows: 'Anarchy in Persia: nothing to be done: dust, cupidity and cowardice'. Yet the local German agents, isolated and in hourly danger of their lives, never abandoned confidence. They armed Austrian and German prisoners who had escaped from the concentration camps at Tashkend; they provoked countless incidents in the hope that these incidents would force the British Government to reprisals; they undermined our influence and prestige by every means within their power, contending even that William II had been converted to the Moslem faith. It is impossible not to admire the ardent courage and inventiveness of these devoted patriots. Nor were they unsuccessful. Their propaganda was so efficient that it induced Mustaufi-ul-Mamalek, the Persian Prime Minister, to sign a secret treaty promising Germany the full support of the Persian administration. It was so dangerous that it obliged the British Government to intervene in Persian affairs, to recruit the 'South Persia Rifles' and to send armed forces to occupy Bushire and other points of strategical necessity.

[1] The story of the Anglo-German 'war' in Persia is recorded in vol. ii. of Sir Percy Sykes' *History of Persia* and in *Glutsonne Irans*, by Oskar von Niedermayer.

[2] Marshal Karl von der Goltz Pasha

Although, therefore, we had only violated Persian neutrality to protect ourselves against our enemies, and although the Persian Government had placed themselves entirely in the wrong by concluding secret treaties with one side, while accepting subsidies from the other, yet the fact remains that Persia emerged from the war in a mood of innocent but violated rectitude. It was this mood which Curzon failed to comprehend.

At the time of the Armistice there were four distinct areas of British occupation or domination in Persian territory. In the south, there were the South Persia Rifles—a force levied, paid, and commanded by British officers. In the east there was the cordon established at Meshed and in Seistan by General Sir Wilfrid Malleson. Along the Kasr-i-Shirin, Kermanshah, Hamadan, Kasvin line was 'Dunsterforce' under the command of Major-General L. C. Dunsterville.[1] And at Bushire and on the Gulf there were a few garrisons of Indian troops. A fifth encroachment was, at a later date, represented by Commander D. T. Norris and his naval 'mission' on the Caspian Sea.

The position of these isolated forces was, at the end of 1918, both illogical and dangerous. The Persian Government had (in return for a monthly subsidy of 200,000 tomans) recognised the South Persia Rifles in 1916 and had confirmed this recognition in March of the following year. Yet in the spring of 1918, encouraged by the collapse of Russia and the German

[1] General Dunsterville had originally been sent out with only 12 officers and 141 men to fill the gap of 450 miles left upon our Mesopotamian flank by the defection of Russia. He eventually established himself at Hamadan. The story of this remarkable expedition has been recounted by the General in his attractive book, *Adventures of Dunsterforce*.

advance in Flanders, they had revoked this permission and had demanded the immediate demobilisation of these levies as constituting a force compromising to Persian neutrality. For the moment these representations were justifiably ignored. Yet with the defeat of Germany and Turkey it became increasingly difficult to justify to British or to Persian opinion the maintenance on Persian territory of armed British detachments or levies which, in the circumstances then existing, could have no purpose other than the creation, in a neutral country, of a front against Red Russia.

This dilemma was debated by the Eastern Committee of the War Cabinet on December 30, 1918. Lord Curzon was in the chair. The general opinion of the Committee was that these isolated detachments should immediately be withdrawn, that our commitments in the Middle East should at once be liquidated, and that Persia should be left to face the Bolshevik menace on her own resources. Curzon expressed the view that such a policy of unrestrained evacuation would be 'immoral, feeble and disastrous'. He admitted that our policy of sanitary cordons in northern, southern and eastern Persia, coupled with their contingent subsidies, were costing the British taxpayer some thirty million pounds a year. He agreed that our forces should gradually be reduced; but he urged that a nucleus should be maintained, at least until we were in a position to substitute some stable and less expensive arrangement. He suggested therefore that the Persian Mission which at that moment was knocking at the doors of the Paris Peace Conference should be given frank advice 'which need not be of a purely minatory character'. That we should renew in the most explicit

terms our previous assurances regarding the independence and integrity of the Persian Empire. That we should consent to abrogate the Anglo-Russian Convention and the Constantinople Agreement. That a Persian national army should be formed under foreign officers with a British General at their head. That the finances of Persia should be reorganised by a body of European experts under the direction of a British Treasury official. And that in general we should assume towards Persia the rôle of a determined although liberal protector.

If the Persian Government accepted such an arrangement then Great Britain should assist her with money and advice. If she rejected it, then we could withdraw all our detachments with a clear conscience; and Persia could be left to stew in the Bolshevik juice of her own choosing. His arguments seemed moderate and reasonable. The Eastern Committee agreed to this formulation of policy, and Curzon was authorised to proceed at once with his negotiations.

There was, however, one dissentient. Mr. Edwin Montagu raised a voice of protest. 'I notice', he wrote to Curzon on January 6, 1919, 'in the draft minutes a statement that the Committee agreed with the Chairman. Surely you will not allow this to stand? For the situation was this: Mr. Balfour was away: I was away: I do not see it recorded that C.I.G.S. was present: Lord Robert Cecil (I don't know whether he is a member of the Committee or not now) had left before he had heard either Sir Hamilton Grant or Sir Arthur Hirtzel. And therefore the Committee consisted of the Chairman: and the Chairman, of course, not unnaturally, agreed with the Chairman.' Mr.

Montagu concluded this disagreeable minute with the remark that the proposed settlement would be offensive to Persian feeling and that he, as Secretary of State for India, must refuse to contribute a moiety of the resultant cost from Indian revenues, for the sole purpose of furthering a policy ' in which neither the India Office nor the Government of India concur '.

At the time, and on this particular issue, Curzon was able to persuade Mr. Montagu to withdraw his objections, and to convince him that the proposed negotiations with Persia were neither so imperialist nor so expensive as the India Office (that highly sensitive organism) had at first supposed. Yet the controversy between Edwin Montagu and George Curzon, between the new school of Oriental psychologists and the old, slumbered vividly beneath the ashes of their compromise. At a later date, as will be seen, it burst into angry flames.

For the moment, however, Curzon obtained Cabinet authority to continue a proportion of his subsidies and to maintain a dwindling proportion of his troops. Thus enforced, and conscious of the danger of delay, he applied himself feverishly to negotiation with Tehran.

5

The self-styled Persian Delegation to the Peace Conference had, in the interval, arrived in Paris. It was headed by the Foreign Secretary, Mushaver-ul-Mamalek, and among its junior members was Mirza Hussein Khan Alai, one of the most honourable and enlightened of the younger Persian nationalists. The Persian delegates asked the Supreme Council to afford

them an opportunity to state their views. This request was summarily rejected on the ground that Persia, not having been a belligerent in the European war, had no right of representation at the Peace Conference. The Persians were incensed by this refusal which they attributed to the desire of the British Government to deal with Persia without interference on the part of any other Power. In this they were exaggerating. The Supreme Council would in any case have refused to create a precedent which would assuredly have led to similar claims from other neutrals such as Holland, Switzerland and Sweden. The British Delegation, however, were certainly in error in failing to support Persia's request. On the one hand, they had nothing to gain and much to lose, by conveying the impression that the future of Persia was a matter for their decision alone. On the other hand the claims of the Persian Delegation, when finally committed to writing, were of so fantastic a nature that they would in any case have alienated the sympathies of France and the United States. The Persians in fact claimed the abolition of the capitulations, the cancellation of all foreign concessions, reparation for all damage committed on Persian territory during the war, and an extension of their frontiers which would have placed within Persian territory, not only Transcaspia, Merv and Khiva up to the Oxus, but also the line of the Euphrates in the west embracing Kurdistan, Diarbekir and Mosul. These claims affronted the deepest convictions both of the French and of the Americans: it was an error on our part that we did not permit the Persians to put themselves so hopelessly in the wrong with world opinion. As it was, both the Persians and the world imagined

that their claims had been rejected solely owing to the selfish insistence of Great Britain. Hussein Khan Alai thereafter sailed for the United States as Minister to Washington and succeeded with much skill and integrity in enlisting American sympathies against what he described as the impending strangulation of Persia.

Meanwhile, at Tehran, the negotiations for an Anglo-Persian Treaty were pushed forward with unremitting energy. They were conducted, on the British side, by Sir Percy Cox,[1] and on the Persian side by Vossuq-ed-Dowleh the Prime Minister. The former had for long been Resident in the Persian Gulf and shared Curzon's affection for, and anxiety regarding, Persian integrity, character, ancient buildings, and independence. A silent Apollo, Sir Percy Cox was inclined to take the realities of the Persian temperament more seriously than their aspirations. Vossuq-ed-Dowleh, for his part, was also a realist. Upstanding, handsome and reserved, he combined the traditional distinction of his race with that polish which Vevey and Montreux can add to the culture of Iran. These two distinguished men were born to understand each other. They did. The Treaty, containing a preamble and six Articles, was signed on August 9, 1919. In the first Article the British Government reiterated 'in the most categorical manner the undertakings which they have repeatedly given in the past to respect absolutely the independence and integrity of Persia'. The remaining articles provided for the appointment of ex-

[1] Cox, Major-General Sir Percy Zachariah, b. 1864; Political Resident, Persian Gulf, 1909; Secretary, Foreign Department, Government of India, 1914; Chief Political Officer, Indian Expeditionary Force; Minister at Tehran, 1918-1920; High Commissioner in Iraq, 1920-1923. A cool, calm, distinguished man.

pert British advisers to the Persian Treasury, for the supply of British officers to reorganise the Persian army, for a loan of two million pounds, for British assistance in the construction of Persian railways, and for the appointment of a committee of experts who should study a revision of the existing customs tariff. The British Government undertook at the same time to co-operate in the reconsideration of current treaties, to agree to the rectification of the Persian frontier at certain points, and to support Persia's claim for compensation in respect of war damage perpetrated on her territory by other than British belligerents.

Curzon, with pardonable self-satisfaction, presented this diplomatic achievement to the British Cabinet. In a covering memorandum, dated August 9, 1919, he explained the scope and purpose of the several articles. 'What they mean', he wrote, 'in practice is this: not that we have received or are about to receive a mandate for Persia: not that Persia has handed over to us any part of her liberties: not that we are assuming fresh and costly obligations which will place a great strain upon us in the future: but that the Persian Government, realising that we are the only neighbouring Great Power closely interested in the fate of Persia, able and willing to help her and likely to be interested in that object, have decided of their own free will to ask us to assist Persia in the rehabilitation of her fortunes.'

In so saying, Curzon was abundantly sincere. It is in fact unquestionable that, given our apparent predominance at the time, the Treaty was moderate and generous. In former circumstances the Persians would have welcomed it with acclaim. Curzon could assert with deep conviction that in this Treaty he had com-

bined the needs of the old world with the ideals and formulas of the new. He regarded it, with undisguised complacency, as a diplomatic masterpiece. 'A great triumph', he wrote, 'and I have done it all alone.'

Yet this triumph was not of long duration.

6

Certain mistakes had been made. In the first place, as has already been stated, the Persian Delegation at Paris had been exposed to an affront which they attributed to British malignity. In the second place the negotiations had been conducted in hurried secrecy, a method of procedure which, as Lord Grey pointed out at the time, was inconsistent with the Covenant of the League. In the third place no provision was explicitly made for the deposit of the Treaty in the archives of the League of Nations, an omission which was accidental only but which gave substance to the contention that there was more in the Treaty than appeared. And in the fourth place ugly rumours began to circulate to the effect that rich financial inducements had been offered to the Persian negotiators of the Treaty in order to persuade them to sign. These errors and omissions rendered the Treaty suspect from the start.

Curzon himself, during that summer and autumn of 1919, continued to regard the Treaty with undimmed satisfaction. Lloyd George and Balfour, over there in Paris, might muddle the whole Peace Treaty and confuse the Turkish settlement by partitioning Asia Minor. He had not been consulted: his advice was not listened to: he was not to blame. Yet in their absence he had been able single-handed to achieve a solution of the Persian problem which was generous,

economical, durable and triumphant; a solution which would provide India with a reliable buffer state upon her north-western frontier; a solution which in its very restraint was a proof of the rectitude and unselfishness of British imperialism. He loved India and he loved Persia. The marriage which he had now arranged between them filled him with emotional delight. It was incredible to him that all this happiness should not radiate upon the faces of the bride's relations.

In September 1919 Prince Firuz Mirza, Nosret-ed-Dowleh, visited London. He had succeeded Mushaver-ul-Mamalek as Persian Foreign Minister. A cultured little royalty, with dim pince-nez, a deep regard for M. Jean Cocteau, and an amused but hesitating manner, Prince Firuz discussed with the Foreign Office and the Treasury the measures needed to execute the Treaty which he himself and Vossuq-ed-Dowleh had so recently signed. A banquet was offered to his Highness at the Carlton Hotel. Lord Curzon—the blue ribbon of the Garter slashing his vast shirt-front, a happy confidence beaming widely in his every gesture—addressed the assembled company upon the subject of Persia. 'I know', he said, 'that country and that people to be possessed of marked individuality and national spirit, too ardent to be suppressed, too valuable to be submerged. Was it not natural that Persia, seeking to establish and stabilise her future, should turn to us? Our boundaries march with hers for hundreds of miles on the southern frontier. For a century we have pacified and policed the Gulf. In Mesopotamia we shall presently be her neighbours on the west. It is an obvious interest to us to have a

peaceful and prosperous Persia; and as regards Persia itself, if it be true—and I do not think the most ardent Persian patriot will deny it—that external assistance of some sort is necessary for her, is it not natural that it should be to this country that she should turn?'

Prince Firuz, sitting there beside this opulent orator, crumbled bread shyly. Was he wishing merely that he was back across the channel in the 'Bœuf sur le Toit'? Was he supposing that those satisfied phrases of his host were but the rhetorical covering to a selfishly appeased ambition? Was he for one moment conscious that Curzon, in thus speaking, was disclosing the very depths of his political philosophy, the very roots of his temperament and faith? Firuz Mirza was well aware that the Anglo-Persian Treaty had not, even in its initial stages, been a spontaneous national gesture on the part of the people of Iran. He was aware that many of his own political enemies would misinterpret and exploit the treaty for their own political uses. He crumbled his bread idly, and it may be supposed that he was thinking only of the mutability of human affairs.

A few weeks later Ahmed Shah, the last Emperor of the Kadjar dynasty, arrived in London on a state visit. His fat white face creased in amicable smiles. Lord Curzon, in full uniform, leant back upon the hilt of his sword, which opened surreptitiously like a shooting-stick to afford a meagre support to that large and aching frame. He beamed upon the stout ruler of Iran, upon the great-nephew of the formidable Nasr-ed-Din. Did he also, at that moment, cherish doubts? Was this short, wide, flabby young man the type to regen-

erate (even with the help of Mr. Armitage Smith[1]) a tottering empire? Would it last? Or was Lord Curzon thinking only of Korfanty, of Denikin, of those many other problems which, while he dressed that evening, had encumbered his little bedroom at Carlton House Terrace?

Observers who stood there eyeing those large and garish figures were conscious only of a sense of unreality, of an impression that neither the Shah nor Lord Curzon stood in any very direct relation to the facts of 1919.

7

Attention has already been drawn to the damage done to the prestige and power of the Western Coalition by the refusal of the United States to ratify the Treaty of Versailles. The results of Senator Lodge's manœuvre were in fact more far-reaching even than the refusal of America to interest herself in any but American affairs. It introduced into diplomacy a new and revolutionary doctrine. Until then, a treaty signed by properly accredited representatives was regarded as an accomplished contract: its subsequent ratification by the sovereigns and legislatures of the respective parties was a purely formal corollary: for a parliament to refuse ratification of a treaty properly concluded would have been condemned almost as a breach of faith and as highly damaging to the diplomatic credit of the country concerned. The action of the United States

[1] Armitage Smith, Sydney, b. 1876; a Treasury Official appointed Financial Adviser to the Persian Government, 1920-1921; Secretary-General to the Reparation Commission 1924-1930. A scholarly, energetic and meticulous man; he was much respected by the Persians who, had he not been a symbol of the Anglo-Persian Agreement, would have liked to retain his [illegible]

legislature in repudiating a treaty signed by the chief of the executive created a formidable precedent. The more evasive type of country seized upon this precedent with delight.[1]

Article 24 of the Constitution which had been extracted by the Persian democrats from Muzaffer-ed-Din Shah in 1906 provided that all treaties concluded with foreign Powers must be submitted for the approval of the Majlis. Sir Percy Cox, Lord Curzon and Vossuq-ed-Dowleh failed to recollect this article. Had they remembered it, there would have been no difficulty in inserting a clause into the treaty obliging the Persian Government to summon the Majlis within three months and to submit the treaty to that body for formal ratification. Had such a clause been inserted there can be little doubt that the Majlis would have approved the treaty, which, in 1919, appeared to the majority of Persians to be both moderate and valuable.

It must be remembered that neither the Majlis nor the word 'ratification' was at that date in the forefront of consciousness. The former body had not met since 1915. The latter word had not, in August of 1919, assumed that immense diplomatic significance which it has since acquired. The omission, although comprehensible, was none the less disastrous. It introduced into the situation that element of procrastination so beloved of all Asiatics, so dangerous to Western diplomacy. For the moment, Vossuq-ed-Dowleh proceeded as if the treaty were in fact operative.

[1] It should be emphasised that the action of the U.S. Senate, however damaging in practice, was excellent in principle. It served to underline the basis of democratic diplomacy, namely: (1) Complete control of policy; (2) Execution of that policy to be left to experts. The refusal of the Senate to ratify President Wilson's Treaty marked the first, and most important, differentiation between policy proper, and diplomacy proper.

General Dickson left for Tehran to organise the Persian army: Mr. Armitage Smith abandoned Treasury Chambers for the Persian Malié, their so-called Ministry of Finance: a Persian Railway Syndicate was constituted to examine the *tracé* of future trunk lines: and a first instalment of the loan was paid into the Persian coffers.

Gradually, as 1919 slipped into 1920, opposition began to make itself felt. The doctrine of self-determination had not only been applied to the subject races of Europe, it was also being cited in favour of Arab, Armenian, even Kurdish, independence. Upon the basis of that doctrine the supremacy of Great Britain was being challenged in Ireland, India, Egypt—even in the newly liberated Mesopotamia. Was the might of Great Britain, was the unity among the victorious Powers, as overwhelming and as durable as had at first been supposed? Europe for all its dreadnoughts and munitions was not, with any rapidity, suppressing Mustapha Kemal. And what about Russia? Already the Bolshevik agents in Azerbaijan were urging Persia not to submit to British dictation, were interpreting the treaty as a treacherous surrender of Persian liberties wrested from a prostrate Persia by force and bribes. And, once again, Russia was making herself felt upon the Caspian.

In May of 1920 the Russians landed at the Persian port of Enzeli, occupied Resht and installed the brigand Kutchik Khan as head of a Gilan Government subservient to their wishes. The British detachment on the Caspian retreated to Kasvin.[1] Vossuq-ed-Dowleh

[1] The War Office, as a result of this discomfiture, renewed their insistence that all British troops should be withdrawn from Central Persia. 'There is',

resigned and shortly afterwards left for Switzerland. He was succeeded by Mushir-ed-Dowleh, who was extremely sensitive to nationalist opinion. The new Prime Minister informed the British Legation that, pending ratification by the Majlis, the Anglo-Persian Agreement must be regarded as 'in suspense'.

Lord Curzon was enraged. He described Mushir-ed-Dowleh's intimation as 'pedantic and foolish'. Sir Percy Cox, by that time, had been succeeded by Mr. Herman Norman, a diplomatist of intelligence and vision who has unjustly been made the scapegoat for the collapse which ensued. Daily upon the unfortunate head of Mr. Norman descended cypher telegrams which, from internal evidence, could have been drafted only by the Secretary of State himself. A period of querulous confusion followed. Five different governments succeeded each other rapidly in Tehran, but still the Majlis remained unsummoned. Lord Curzon realised that the Agreement was slipping from his grasp.

wrote Mr. Winston Churchill to Lord Curzon on May 20, 1920, 'something to be said for making peace with the Bolsheviks. There is also something to be said for making war upon them. There is nothing to be said for a policy of doing all we can to help to strengthen them, to add to their influence and prestige, to weaken those who are fighting against them, and at the same time leaving weak British forces tethered in dangerous places where they can easily and suddenly be overwhelmed. I do not see that anything we can do within the present limits of our policy can possibly avert the complete loss of British influence throughout the Caucasus, Transcaspia and Persia. . . . I should have been only too ready to have helped you with a different policy which, properly supported, would now have ended this criminal régime in Russia. But in view of the decisions which were taken six and eight months ago, and in view of the uninstructed state of public opinion, I think that it is impossible. It only remains to accept the consequences and withdraw our forces everywhere to defensive positions in close proximity with their railheads, where they can be cheaply maintained and where they can operate effectively against an aggressive enemy.

I must absolutely decline to continue to share responsibility for a policy of mere bluff'

On November 16, 1920, he explained the position to the House of Lords in a speech which displays both the faults and the virtues of his political philosophy :

> 'In our Persian policy', he said, 'there has been no element whatsoever of wild or reckless adventure such as has sometimes been ascribed to us. On the contrary, there has been a deliberately thought out plan—in a position of kaleidoscopic change—to solve the Persian problem in a manner consistent, not so much with British interests (though naturally we have not forgotten them) as with the continued national existence and independence of Persia herself.'
>
> 'There was', he continued, 'no attempt to suggest anything of the nature of a British protectorate over Persia. We never thought of going to the League of Nations to ask for a mandate over Persia. We preferred to treat her as a friendly and independent State in the position of equality with ourselves.'

He concluded his speech with an appeal to the good sense of the Persian people. 'I believe', he said, 'and I say it in no tone of vanity—that they regard me as a true and consistent friend of their country'. Should the Majlis accept the treaty, then it would at once be registered with the League of Nations. Should they reject it, then 'the Persian Government must take its own course. We shall have done our best to help them and, if they are unwilling to accept our assistance, the responsibility must be theirs'.

The initiative, by then, no longer remained in the hands of the British Government. Our forces of occupation, at no time very numerous, had been reduced to a few isolated detachments. Our prestige had waned. Russia was contiguous, overpowering and amazingly friendly. She offered Persia her sup-

port, the cancellation of all existing concessions, and the abolition of the capitulations. Here was an offer more irresistible than anything that could be advanced from London. The decision was finally taken, not by the Majlis or the Persian Government, but by Reza Khan—an ex-trooper in the Cossack brigade. On February 21, 1921, Reza and his Cossacks marched upon the capital and arrested the Cabinet of Sipahdar. On February 26, 1921, he pronounced the annulment of the Anglo-Persian Agreement and on the same day a Russo-Persian Treaty was signed at Moscow. In the following June the Majlis was opened by the Shah in a speech in which reference was made to the 'happy demise of the Anglo-Persian Agreement'. The negotiators of the Agreement were denounced by the Majlis as traitors to their country. On July 26, 1921, it fell to Lord Curzon to pronounce in the House of Lords a funeral oration upon his own handiwork:

'No more disinterested or single-minded attempt was ever made by a Western Power to re-establish the existence, and secure the prosperity, of an Eastern country. If the noble lord asks me how I view the situation thus created, I am fain to confess that I regard it with a feeling of disappointment, almost of despair. . . . If the Persian Government prefer to find salvation in Moscow they have a perfect right to do so. But I may be permitted, as an old friend, to speak to them and to utter a word of warning—and to say that in the long run the main sufferers from the policy which is being adopted will not be Great Britain and the other countries but will be Persia herself.'

'Of all the speeches', he concluded, 'that I have ever made upon Persia—and they have been many—

the one which I make this afternoon has been delivered with the greatest regret.'

8

How far was Curzon's failure due to miscalculation, and how far to mischance? His intentions were honourable, even romantic. His policy, in that it would have secured control without undue interference, stability without heavy expenditure, was original and ingenious. His concessions to Oriental nationalism were (given the atmosphere of 1919) far-sighted and liberal. He was mistaken in short-circuiting the Paris Conference and the League of Nations, yet this error arose, less from a love of secret imperialism, than from an acute distaste for cooperation with foreign Powers. It was unfortunate, also, that he forgot about ratification until it was too late. More serious was his misconception of the attitude of the average Persian towards Russia and Great Britain. He did not realise that in 1919 it was Great Britain who was regarded as the oppressor and Russia as the potential friend. Nor did he rightly estimate the congenital instinct of the Persian to regard each of these two Powers with equal suspicion and to support themselves, their country and their relations by alternating overtures, now to Moscow, and now to Downing Street.

It is questionable, however, whether Curzon, even if he had not committed these slight errors of method and conception, could have for long maintained relations with Persia on the basis of the Anglo-Persian Agreement. The element of authority, or force, was lacking in Great Britain. The element of consent, or acquiescence, was lacking in Persia. On the one hand

you had war-exhaustion and a wave of anti-imperialist feeling. On the other hand you had nationalism, acute self-consciousness, and a profound conviction that, in view of world opinion, Great Britain would never dare to go too far. Had not President Wilson denounced all 'separate interests', all 'zones of influence'? Were not the United States to-day a Power more authoritative than the British Empire, and was not American opinion always upon the side of those oppressed nationalities who had the good fortune to be outside the area of the Caribbean Sea? Had not Kemal, with Russian assistance, defied the Western Coalition? Were not all countries, whether great or small, equal in the eyes of the League of Nations? Never would Persia have acquiesced for long in a treaty implying (however tactfully) inferiority, supervision or control.

In Reza Khan Persia imagined that she had found a second Kemal. Within four years the ex-trooper had expelled the Kadjar dynasty, seated himself upon the throne of Akbar, and placed the Darya-i-Nur, the great Moghul diamond, in his khaki hat. From that moment Persia has surrendered herself into the heavy hands of Reza Shah Pahlevi. This bullet-headed man, with the voice of an asthmatic child, now controls the destinies of Iran. Is it for good or for bad? Persia has lost much by the change—her charm, her gentleness, her culture, and her dignity. What has she gained? There is no liberty in Persia to-day—there is fear, corruption, dishonesty and disease. Is national independence so *far* more important than personal freedom? That is a question which the present generation are unable to answer.



LORD CURZON LEAVING CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE

March, 1922

Chapter VI

EGYPT

1919-1922

Significance of 1918-1928 *period—An age of readjustment in international values—Essence of this readjustment was decline of Great Power system—Origin and nature of that system—Causes of its collapse—Economic expansion and nationalist devolution—The war destroys predominance of Concert of Europe—That destruction emphasised by rise of the United States, the British Dominions, the smaller Powers, and the League of Nations—Effect of this revolution on Oriental nationalism—Reasons for its spontaneous emergence—Self-determination and American opinion—The Afghan rising as a 'specimen' of the revolt of Islam—The Egyptian problem—Basic falsity of our position in Egypt—Nature of Egyptian revolt—Its immediate causes—Essential divergence between British and Egyptian states of mind—Egyptian delegation refused hearing in Paris or London—This a serious mistake—Curzon's own attitude towards the Egyptian problem—The rebellion of March* 1919*—Lord Allenby High Commissioner—The Milner Mission and report—The Milner-Adly conversations of* 1920*—Curzon supports the Milner scheme but is outvoted in Cabinet—The Curzon-Adly negotiations of* 1921*—Their failure—Curzon's controversial Note of December* 3, 1921*—The Sarwat incident of* 1922*—Curzon decides on unilateral action—His manifesto of February* 28, 1922, *and his Note to Foreign Powers of March* 15, 1922.

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The proportions chosen in this study can, however, be justified on two grounds. In the first place, Curzon himself was not, in the early stages, directly concerned with, or interested in, the purely European problems of the Peace settlement. In the second place, it is by approaching post-war diplomacy from the East rather than from the West that light can best be thrown upon that readjustment of hitherto accepted values which renders the decade from 1918 to 1928 the most interesting period which has occurred in diplomatic history since 1815, or even, it might be said, since 1475.

This latter contention needs to be explained. Unless it be realised that during the years following on November 1918 there occurred a profound (although still obscure) change in international ideology, there is a danger of regarding the errors of individual statesmen or countries as the causes, rather than as the symptoms, of an ensuing mutation in pre-war international values. The ineptitude of democratic diplomacy after 1918 is generally ascribed to lack of vision in those responsible for its direction. It can be contended, of course, that they erred in trying to solve the problems of a new world in terms of the old. Such a criticism would be superficial were it not at the same time recognised that the alteration in international values which took place between 1918 and 1928 is even to-day (fifteen years after the event) difficult to explain or even to define. We blame the statesmen of 1918 for failing to reach an accurate diagnosis, when we ourselves, who can perform the autopsy, are still uncertain of the real nature of the disease. It is easy, for instance, to accuse Curzon or Lloyd George of underestimating the force of Oriental nationalism or the effect of shell-shock

upon the British character. Even if this criticism be admitted, there remains something more which needs to be explained. How came it, let us ask, that the British people who, twenty years previously, had gloated over Omdurman, should have winced, in 1920, at the thought of a trifling military expedition to Kabul? How came it that a Coalition which had just defeated the most powerful military combination that the world has ever seen was unable to impose its authority upon Mustapha Kemal? The will to victory, it will be said, was no longer present. But *why* was it no longer present? No purely psychological explanation can suffice.

Essentially the conflict of principle which arose in 1918, and which will persist for two generations at least, was, to quote Professor Arnold Toynbee, 'a battle not fought by States with material weapons . . . but waged, within each nation, and within the souls of individuals, between opposing states of mind'.[1] What was the nature of these states of mind?

Two separate tendencies can be recognised as having, since 1900, altered the state of mind prevalent, on the one hand in the West, and on the other hand in the East. The first tendency was cultural; it affected national consciousness. The second tendency was political; it affected national confidence. Culturally, the peoples of the West, as a result of popular education, had evolved within their own communities several conflicting types of national culture. The corporate idea, and with it corporate opinion, had disintegrated. There was no unified conception, and thus no united will. In the East, on the other hand, the contact with

[1] Professor Arnold Toynbee, *The World after the Peace Conference*, p. 91.

Western culture had produced a unifying rather than a disintegrating effect. It resulted in a diminution of that fatalistic acquiescence induced by the old-fashioned form of the Moslem religion. It created also an increase in national consciousness at the very moment when that consciousness, in the West, was on the decline. This heightened awareness, among Oriental peoples, of their national identity coincided with a simultaneous increase of political confidence. This in its turn was caused by the collapse of the Great Power system. It is possible to explain that collapse in historical terms.

History suggests that every successive wave of civilisation, be it Egyptian, Assyrian, Achaemenid or Roman, passes through five phases. There is first the mere nebula of patriarchal, pastoral and tribal organisation. There is secondly the concentration of this nebula into separate bodies forming self-conscious territorial states. The third period is one of rivalry and conflict between these states leading to the elimination of all but one. The ensuing World-Power creates conditions under which a new religion arises, and under the solvent of that religion the particular phase of civilisation dissolves, transmuting itself into a new form of society.

Our present wave of civilisation is in the third stage, that of conflicting territorial states. It may be approaching the fourth stage of a dominating world-authority. It would be idle to speculate whether that authority will take the form of some Anglo-Saxon hegemony, of some Russo-Asiatic dominance, or of the rule of the United States of Europe and America. It would be equally profitless to consider whether the

religion which will eventually emerge will be mainly economic or social. We are concerned, only, with the problems of the third stage, and our aim is to define the important changes and dislocations introduced into that stage during the period which began in 1870 and ended in 1918. Those changes must be examined in terms of their effect upon the Great Power system—that organisation of territorial states which began with the decline in the moral authority of the Papacy and Holy Roman Empire in 1475, and which entered upon its most acutely concentrated stage in the forty-four years between 1870 and 1914.

The Great Power system was the foundation upon which rested the whole diplomacy of the nineteenth century. It reached its apogee in 1914 when the world was politically and economically dependent upon eight Great Powers. The directive force of this combine can be stated, although with obvious reservations, to have been vested in the six European Powers—Great Britain, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy and Russia. These Powers constituted 'The Concert of Europe'. Yet already in 1914 this system contained within itself the germs of dissolution.

Two such germs can be isolated, the first an economic germ, the second a psychological germ. On the one hand the industrial system, as, in terms of Europe, it expanded from 1870 onwards, diminished the self-sufficiency of the Great, as compared to the lesser, Powers. Economically, such countries as Sweden or Rumania assumed an importance in excess of their military, political or territorial strength. On the other hand the doctrine of nationality, which in its earlier manifestations in Italy or Germany had actually for-

tified the Great Power system, began, towards the end of the nineteenth century, to dislocate and diminish that system. In 1914, for instance, the autocracy of the Great Powers was already less unquestioned than it had been in 1874. A final dislocation was precipitated by the World War of 1914-1918.

This dislocation can best be defined in terms of the collapse of the Concert of Europe. The defeat of Germany, the disappearance of Austria-Hungary, the withdrawal of Russia, robbed the Concert of half its members. Of the remaining three, France was intent mainly upon the problem of her own security, Italy was weakened by internal dissensions; and Great Britain was not only unaware of the whole process but both unwilling and unable to carry on single-handed that tradition of benevolent authority which, in its best moments, the Concert had represented.

The collapse of the Concert inevitably implied a decline in the influence of Europe, hitherto supreme, upon world affairs. This decline was emphasised by the emergence of the United States as the strongest of all the Great Powers. In these altered proportions Europe, hitherto the centre of all international conceptions, shrank to a mere peninsula of Asia. The whole focus, the whole incidence of authority, had shifted.

Nor was this the only blow struck, from 1918 onwards, at the Great Power system. A process of devolution had for long been taking place within the British Empire itself. International opinion had not then, and has not now, understood the true significance of Dominion status. We do not understand it ourselves. It is still uncertain whether the material

strength of Great Britain has been increased or diminished by this devolution. Yet the decentralisation of the British Empire certainly led foreign observers to suppose (if only momentarily and superficially) that Great Britain herself had lost immeasurably in physical force. And it certainly encouraged the growing belief that the era of Great Powers was over and that the era of lesser Powers had begun.

This belief was increased by the interpretation given by President Wilson to the Monroe Doctrine, and by his opposition to the dominance of South America by the United States. In his message of December 1917 the President, in welcoming the Pan-America congress, recognised the Latin Republics of the continent as 'partners acting on a footing of equality and genuine independence'. Here again was a decline in the doctrine of authority; an increase in the doctrine of national egalitarianism.

This latter doctrine was still further established by the number and importance of the lesser States which emerged from the peace settlement. Professor Arnold Toynbee, in his *World after the Peace Conference* (from which admirable essay most of the above theory has been adduced), prints a very interesting comparative table which shows that before the war only sixteen of the lesser States were taking an active part in international affairs, of whom fifteen were situated in Europe. After the war this number had been increased to forty-seven, and of these active participants only twenty-two were European, whereas twenty-five were extra-European.

All these tendencies, these illusive alterations in proportion and balance, were concentrated and confirmed

in the Assembly of the League of Nations—a body officially given to the world on January 10, 1920. Under the Covenant, the theory was established of the equality of all Powers, great or small. This pernicious theory has rendered the League incapable of carrying on the highly successful traditions of the Concert of Europe, and has exposed it, in practice, to the charge of frequent hypocrisy. Yet the theory had been launched. It spread rapidly through Asia and South America. It dealt the final deathblow to the Great Power system. It dealt the final deathblow to the hegemony of Europe.

2

The above considerations are necessary to any understanding of those curious outbursts of Oriental nationalism which marked the years 1919 and 1920. It is often suggested that these outbursts were occasioned by the fact that Mr. Lloyd George sent the Greeks to Smyrna or that Lord Curzon endeavoured to impose a British protectorate over Persia. They are to be ascribed, in fact, to less incidental causes. They are to be ascribed to the collapse, not of Europe only, but of all general belief (whether among 'dominant' or among 'subservient' races) in the Great Power system.

This collapse was primarily occasioned by a wholly honourable fallacy. The Covenant of the League of Nations had since January 10 become 'The Law'. All individuals, in Anglo-Saxon countries, are equal before 'The Law'. Therefore, under the Covenant, all nations were equal. In civilised communities 'The Law' can exercise immediate and unquestioned compulsion. The compulsion of the League of Nations

was neither unquestioned nor immediate. 'The Law' existed as an aspiration, but not as a fact. Yet, in the early months of 1919, Oriental nations were led to suppose that power had lost all validity, and that litigation had taken its place.

Before examining the Egyptian outburst of 1919 it may be well to explain why these outbursts have been described as 'curious'. It must be remembered that there were six separate revolts, during those two years, of the East against the West. There was the Egyptian revolt of March 1919, the trouble with Afghanistan in May 1919, the prolonged hostilities with Mustapha Kemal from 1919 to 1923, the Iraq rebellion of July 1920, the Persian nationalist movement from 1919-1925, and the Syrian rising of July 1920.

These anti-occidental movements were to a certain extent connected, but they were not co-ordinated.[1] It is in fact a strange phenomenon that within the same period, and in six different regions of the East, there should have been similar uprisings against the authority of those very Western Powers who, in appearance at least, were at the very plenitude of their physical supremacy. Egypt and Afghanistan had remained quiescent at a time when Great Britain was being defeated by Germany, and even Turkey, on land and sea. Persia, at a moment when British troops were violating her territory, hesitated, in spite of all inducements, to join hands with the Central Powers. The Arabs had

[1] It might be contended even that to use the expression 'Islamic revolt' is to throw undue emphasis upon Moslem solidarity. Such solidarity existed, but it was of a nationalist rather than of a religious nature. The Egyptians, for instance, were far more interested in, and influenced by, the development of the Irish situation than they were affected by events in Afghanistan, Persia, Russia or even Turkey.

assisted as allies in our victory. The Syrians had clamoured for the intervention of the West. And Turkey, to all seeming, lay prostrate at the feet of the Allied and Associated fleets and armies. Yet it was at the moment of our victory, and not at the moment of our defeat, that these movements came to a head. Is it to be supposed that the Oriental nations realised with greater clarity than did the statesmen of the Western Powers that the Great Power system had in fact collapsed? Is it to be supposed that this explosion of Oriental nationalism was some spontaneous combustion from gases generated during the four suppressed years of the war? Is it to be supposed that the emergence of America as the greatest Power in the world, that the consequent decline in the importance of Europe, suddenly stimulated nations, as divergent as the Afghans and the Syrians, to violent animosity? Did the Oriental mind, so prone to division, foresee the inevitable dislocation of the Coalition, the impending reversal of alliances? Or was it merely that these nations and races felt dimly that the old values were now in the melting-pot, that everything had become fluid and elastic, that the future was still malleable, and that some drastic action must be taken before the old proportions of power hardened once again into a restrictive crust?

It may be assumed that each of the above considerations was, although subconsciously, operative. In the forefront of the Oriental mind loomed, however, considerations of more topical expediency. The Allied Powers surrendered to President Wilson and Russia in accepting the principle of self-determination and no annexations. Even to the simplest minds imperialism,

however disguised, was a violation of that principle. That old trades-union, the Concert of Europe, had been dissolved. A tribunal had suddenly sprung into existence to which an appeal could be made against the machine-guns of the Western Powers. That tribunal was the tribunal of world, as distinct from European, opinion.

A convenient, and self-contained, 'specimen' of this new fermentation is provided by Afghanistan. Ever since the early 'eighties Afghanistan had been so terrified of the Russian advance in Central Asia that she had agreed to place herself under a vague form of British protection. Under the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 Afghanistan was recognised as falling within the British sphere of influence. During the Great War enemy agents, with their accustomed courage and ingenuity, succeeded in reaching Kabul and exerted every effort to induce the Amir Habibullah to join the Central Powers. He resisted their blandishments. In February of 1919, the Amir Habibullah was murdered and his son Amanullah reigned in his stead. The Bolshevik revolution had in the interval removed from Afghan minds the terror of Russian infiltration and their resultant readiness to submit themselves to British influence. In April of 1919 the Amir Amanullah deliberately planned, and on March 8 following actually delivered, an unprovoked attack upon the Indian frontier. He was met by force of arms. Within less than six weeks the Afghan army had been routed and the Amir found himself obliged to sue for an armistice. A preliminary treaty of peace was signed at Rawal Pindi on August 8, 1919, and confirmed by a supplementary treaty concluded at Kabul on Novem-

ber 22, 1921. So much for the main facts of the Afghan outburst of 1919.

It is the implication of these facts which is so curious and startling. A small Oriental despot committed himself to a wholly gratuitous act of aggression against the Indian Empire and at a moment when that Empire, to all appearance, was mobilised, victorious and armed. He was completely defeated and forced to sue for mercy. Yet, in the eventual terms of peace, not only did the Government of India exact no penalties, but by a letter addressed to the Afghan delegate by Sir Hamilton Grant,[1] they surrendered all claim to control the policy of Afghanistan. 'Thus the Amir Amanullah gained, as the reward of defeat, the principal point in the programme with which he had started the war, while the Government of India abandoned, as the price of victory, the control over the foreign policy of Afghanistan which it had exercised for forty years.'[2] As a result of this surrender, Afghanistan opened direct relations with Russia and on February 28, 1921, concluded a treaty of peace and amity with the U.S.S.R. Even more significant was the supplementary treaty negotiated under Russian auspices between Afghanistan and Turkey and signed at Moscow on March 1, 1921. This treaty was in fact less a convention of amity than a propagandist pronouncement. By Article 3 Turkey was complimented for having 'set the example as the Guide of Islam', and each party undertook to support the other against 'an imperialist State which follows the policy of invading and exploiting the East'.

[1] Sir Alfred Hamilton Grant, b. 1872; a Rugby blue; Foreign Secretary to Government of India, 1914-1919; Chief Commissioner, North-West Frontier Province, 1919-1921.

[2] *Survey of International Affairs*, 1920-1923, by Arnold Toynbee, p. 382.

Here, therefore, was an instance of a small Moslem country wantonly defying the Government of India, extracting from ensuing defeat the full measure of independence, and using that independence to contract, explicitly against Great Britain, treaties of alliance with Turkey and the Soviet. If Afghanistan, remote and unregarded, could in this manner extract the full fruits of victory from an overwhelming military defeat, can it be wondered that other Oriental countries, whose geographical and cultural position assured them a far wider sympathy in European and American quarters, were convinced that Great Britain, whatever happened, would, in fear of world-opinion, be unable for any length of time to impose her authority ? [1]

Such, therefore, were the tendencies, the illusions, the ideas and the incidents which, whether consciously or unconsciously, affected the states of mind in which both sides approached the Egyptian problem of 1919.

3

Great Britain, from the very start, had been in a false position in regard to Egypt.[2] Ostensibly, we had occupied the country in 1882 upon some sort of man-

[1] The India Office were not responsible for these negotiations which were conducted and concluded by the Government of India. The latter were at the time in a nervous condition owing to the situation in the Punjab and to recent symptoms of unrest among the British troops garrisoned in India.

[2] The main dates in Anglo-Egyptian relations are as follows : February 13, 1841, the Sultan issues a *firman* making the Pashalik of Egypt hereditary in the family of Mehemet Ali ; 1863, Ismail becomes Khedive ; 1869, Suez Canal opened ; 1875, Disraeli buys majority shares in the Canal ; 1876, Ismail's extravagance leads to Anglo-French intervention in the form of the Caisse de la Dette ; 1881, revolt of Arabi Pasha ; 1882, British intervene and win victory of Tel-el-Kebir ; 1883-1907, the Cromer period.

date from the Sultan and as partners with the French. By 1890 both the mandate and the partnership had ceased to have any meaning. We fell back upon those evasions of reality which come so naturally to the English temperament. We claimed, and asserted openly, that our occupation was only temporary in character. It has lasted for more than fifty years. We pretended that we were protecting Egypt against the menace of foreign invasion and against a return to the horrors and wastefulness of the Ismailian régime. There was no such menace. We pretended that we were there to protect foreign interests. The foreign colonies would have preferred to be protected by their own Governments. We pretended that we were there, and remained there, 'for the good of the fellahin'. Yet in regard to this beneficence the fellah himself was not consulted. The one thing that, until 1920, we refused to contend or to admit, even to ourselves, was that we occupied Egypt by force: because of the Suez Canal, because of our prestige, because of the large amount of British capital interested in the stability of the system.

During the thirty-seven years of this 'tempered and benevolent despotism'[1] Lord Cromer was able to accord to Egypt the benefits of brilliant financial and economic administration, while hiding from his compatriots and the world the essential anomaly of our presence, as well as the occult mysteries of his own power. When Mr. Gladstone assumed office in 1892 it seemed for a moment as if the Cromer system might be asked to explain itself. 'The result is', wrote Lord Cromer, 'that I am brought out of my hiding place. The

[1] Zetland's *Cromer*, p. 307.

reality, which before was only known to a few behind the scenes, becomes patent to all the world. This is enough to shatter the system.'[1] A system which has to protect itself by obscurantism such as this is clearly founded upon no very precise or logical basis. 'We have never', wrote Lord Milner in his report of November 1920, 'honestly faced the Egyptian problem'. Intellectual, as distinct from practical, honesty is not among our British virtues.

As always with those successive adjustments of ideals to action, which have produced that strange phenomenon known as Anglo-Saxon civilisation (and which are so often stigmatised by the Latins as proofs of English hypocrisy), there is much which is wholly reputable to be advanced upon the other side. The Suez Canal was in fact a vital channel of imperial communication and the protection of that connecting cord did in fact entail some measure of physical occupation and control. Ethically, this interference was justified by the enormous benefits which our administration conferred upon the Egyptian people themselves. There was no oppression; there was a vast amount of disinterested and highly efficient assistance. It may well be that the 'fellahin argument' was often advanced as a convenient sincerity; yet it remained a sincerity none the less; it is unquestionable that the illiterate peasant of Egypt, who constitutes some 92 per cent. of the entire population, did in fact benefit, both personally and corporately, from our presence in his country. Except upon the basis of the 'nationalism versus imperialism' argument there is no accusation which can be brought against the British administration of

[1] Zetland's *Cromer*, p. 204.

Egypt. The validity of that argument remains, to this day, in very dubious question.

The anomaly of our position in Egypt was based upon that same conflict of principle which, in this study, has again and again intruded. In fact, we were there on the basis of authority or force. In theory, we contended that we were there by consent. It was because we tried to adjust these two irreconcilables of force and consent that our Egyptian policy became an alternation of menaces and surrender.

A further anomaly should also be noted. Until 1919 we had governed Egypt through local satraps such as Cromer and Kitchener. Both the House of Commons and Egypt accepted this governance as a matter of course. After 1919 the issue was stated in terms of democratic theory, and in such terms it could not logically be defended. Once we substituted a political theory for benevolent autocracy we were lost. The Egyptians accepted, and even loved, Cromer and Kitchener. They respected Lord Lloyd. Yet so soon as we began to regard the Egyptian problem, not as an imperial but as a democratic problem, the lack of any logical connexion between the two became very apparent. The Egyptians were quick to seize upon this gap in our logic. Given their extremely juridical mind, their passion for the letter rather than the spirit of the law, it was unfortunate that we should have tried to substitute a democratic justification for what was in fact an imperial need. It was our confused and nervous attempts to adjust the one to the other that created in the Egyptian mind the impression that we were afraid.

'Realities', writes Lord Lloyd,[1] 'which were found

[1] Lord Lloyd, *Egypt since Cromer*, vol. i, p. 339.

inconvenient were hastily covered by fictions which had a convenient appearance'. A spirit of compromise, almost of deception, entered into our handling of the Egyptian question. In the place of rigid action we took refuge in elastic formulas. As compared with the British mind, the Oriental temperament has a genius for elasticity. We thus enabled the Egyptians to manœuvre us on to that very area of discussion in which their gifts were incomparably superior to our own.

The essence of our difficulty was that, from the outset, we had felt obliged, mainly owing to the justified jealousy of France, to avoid formulating any legal basis for our occupation and control of Egypt. In 1904, when we admitted France's rights in Morocco, we could have established our analogous position in Egypt upon a legal basis. Our passion for compromise is so acute that we prefer a compromise even when a logical definition is both offered and advantageous. We missed that opportunity. A second and more compelling occasion was offered by the declaration of war with Turkey. Here again we shirked the logical conclusion, and, on December 18, 1914, proclaimed only a protectorate over Egypt and not annexation.[1] Our victory in the war furnished a third opportunity for regularising our position. Again we missed that opportunity. Lord Allenby begged the Government to insert in the treaty of peace with Turkey a clause by which the Sultan transferred to Great Britain his suzerainty over Egypt. We hesitated to adopt so open a course. We insisted only that the

[1] Our hesitation to annex Egypt in 1914 was fortified by considerations of International Law. Juridically Egypt was in the position of 'occupied enemy (*i.e.* Turkish) territory', and under the Hague Convention a belligerent was forbidden to annex such territory while hostilities continued.

Sultan should, in the treaty, renounce his own rights of suzerainty. This left us in a position as anomalous as that which had existed before the war. The justification of our presence in Egypt remained based, not upon the defensible right of conquest, or on force, but upon our own belief in the element of consent. That element, in 1919, did not, in any articulate form, exist. It was dramatically challenged by the Egyptian outburst of March 1919.

4

Among the several post-war manifestations of the revolt of Islam, the Egyptian rising was not only the first in time, but the most perplexing in motive. Incidental, and sometimes accidental, causes have been adduced to account for the revolt in other Oriental countries. It has been argued, for instance, that the Afghan rising was due to the personal ambition of Amanullah and to the effect upon Afghan feeling of the apparent collapse of Russian imperialism. The gradually increasing self-assertion of Persia has been ascribed to the example and encouragement given to that timid country by her Islamic colleagues, and by the obvious weakening of our forces of occupation and control. The Turkish war, in its turn, has been explained by the provocation of the Greek landing at Smyrna and by the disunion and lethargy of the Allied Coalition. The Egyptian revolt can be ascribed to no such external or adventitious events.[1] An examination of its causes, or

[1] There is, of course, nothing new about Egyptian nationalism. Even in classical times the sporadic, and apparently unmotived, risings against the Ptolemies or the Roman Empire were notorious. The Monophysite heresy in itself might be interpreted as a manifestation of national feeling against the doctrine and domination of Constantinople. The Arabi rebellion was cer-

lack of causes, suggests that in every Oriental country, behind the surface symptoms, was a deep change in diathesis. Even to-day we cannot be certain of the true nature of that change, nor can we estimate whether it will be permanent, or whether it will flicker out gradually, losing current owing to the intermittent pulsations of Asiatic will-power. Of one thing alone can we be positive, namely that the whole Islamic revolt was provoked, not by local mistakes, not by temporary misconceptions, but by some deep tide of feeling which even to-day remains mysterious, probably exaggerated, but certainly obscure.

True it is that the war had placed a strain upon Egyptian acquiescence. There had come a decline in the nature of British administration, and as the numbers of British officials increased, so did their quality diminish. The tactful relations maintained between the British advisers and Egyptian politicians under the Cromer régime, the 'diplomatic theory' upon which that delicate system had been poised, gave place, after 1919, to a 'colonial theory' and the gulf between the British administrators and the Egyptians perceptibly widened. The discipline of the troops of occupation, the conduct of overseas detachments stationed temporarily in Egypt, did not maintain the high standard of the pre-war period, and our prestige accordingly declined. Prices had risen, and the fellahin had many reasons for discontent. Our military requisitions were extorted locally by corrupt native agents who justified their own dishonest rapacity by throwing the blame

tainly such a manifestation. There were violent nationalist movements during the last year of Cromer's administration and during the administration of Sir Eldon Gorst.

upon the British authorities. In such an atmosphere, and owing to what Lord Lloyd defines as the 'pre-occupied inattention' of the British authorities, the nationalist leaders had been able to consolidate their position. And the general doctrine of self-determination, as exemplified so startlingly by the liberation of the Arabs, had a most dissolvent effect.

On the other hand Egypt had suffered less during the war than any other belligerent or neutral country situated within the actual area of hostilities. She had been preserved from invasion. Her financial and even her economic situation had improved. The great mass of the population, of whom only 8 per cent. could read, had small conception of political issues and little interest in national self-consciousness. It seems strange indeed that a country thus situated should have chosen as the moment of its revolt a time when Great Britain had just achieved the greatest of all her victories and possessed available force more overwhelming than ever before in the history of Anglo-Egyptian relations.

Apart from the essential and obscure conflict between the imperial and the nationalist theory, between aristocracy and democracy, between authority and consent, there was, as between the British and the Egyptian states of mind, a very significant divergence of aspect. The British Government had, ever since the Anglo-French Convention of 1904, come to regard the Egyptian problem as a purely bilateral problem affecting only Egypt and Great Britain. This state of mind had become crystallised after the declaration of a Protectorate in 1914. The Egyptians, however, regarded it, not as a purely Anglo-Egyptian problem,

but as a problem of international law. They regarded themselves as having been liberated by Mehemet Ali and they dated their independence from the firman of 1841 as confirmed by that of 1879. They were sincerely under the impression that the Protectorate was only a war-measure which, once victory had been achieved, would spontaneously be revoked. Almost immediately after the Armistice the divergence between these two states of mind was emphasised in an unfortunate manner.

The Egyptian Government desired to send a delegation to Paris for the purpose of presenting the 'Case for Egypt' before the Peace Conference. The British Government refused to agree to this proposal. Their refusal was a mistake. Yet it was not an ignorant or unconsidered mistake. Sir Reginald Wingate, the High Commissioner, urged Lord Curzon to receive the delegation. The latter felt that any such action would be unfair to the Egyptian people since it would raise hopes which we should be unable to satisfy. It was not possible, at that date, for any British statesmen to foresee the almost limitless capacity for surrender which, in the post-war years, the British public were to develop. Curzon supposed that there were certain principles on which our imperial race would certainly remain adamant. Had he realised that the race had lost its gift for imperialism he would at once have seen that it would be more diplomatic, though less honourable, to receive the delegation. In so thinking he would, diplomatically though not imperially, have been right. Had the controversy been argued out in Paris or London the British Government would have been able to manœuvre upon ground of their own choosing and in

circumstances which they could control. By forcing the conflict back upon Egypt they gave the initiative to the nationalists and placed the tactical and even the strategic advantage in Egyptian hands.

Nor was this all. An Egyptian delegation would have received little support in the Supreme Council from the French, the Italians or the Japanese. President Wilson, who was more intent upon calling a new world into being than upon upsetting the balance of the old, would have evaded the issue, or, at most, have devised some special form of the mandatory system under which the British position in Egypt would have been regularised. To refuse the Egyptian delegation a hearing, not in Paris only, but even in London, was to present them with that grievance which the nationalist leaders so ardently desired. The Albanians, the Epirots, the Ruthenes had been allowed to appear before the Conference. That Egypt should be refused admittance proved that Great Britain was determined to impose her own solution by force and was ashamed to display those intentions to the tribunal of world-opinion. The nationalist leaders were thus able to convince their followers that something sinister was being planned. If Egypt could not obtain a hearing, then she must force herself upon the attention of world-opinion. The sympathies of Europe and America were on her side. The British, by refusing to allow the Egyptians to state their case in Paris, had shown that they were afraid of these sympathies. Direct action was the only alternative. Serious incidents must immediately be provoked. Such were the arguments of the Egyptian leaders.

5

A secondary result of the decision to withdraw the Egyptian question from the scope of the Peace Conference was that Curzon, as being in charge of the Foreign Office, became responsible for the initiation and conduct of an Egyptian policy. He had travelled in Egypt in 1882 at a time when Lord Dufferin was residing in Cairo writing his historic report upon the future form to be given to Anglo-Egyptian relations. Curzon, at that time, had taken but little interest in Egyptian politics. He had spent his days scanning hieroglyphs with abundant energy, and in the evenings he would dine with the Dufferins in the Villa Cattaui and assist them in the *jeux de société*, the dumb crambo and the charity entertainments, with which they brightened their days. In later years he had watched with admiration the cautious mastery of Lord Cromer, whose career he regarded as 'having known no superior, and I think too, no equal in the long and fateful record of Britain's dealings with foreign peoples'. His general attitude towards Egypt in that January 1919 was typical of his approach to all Oriental problems. On the one hand he thought mainly in terms of Asia, of the security of the Indian Empire, and of our communications through the Suez Canal. On the other hand he had no desire to increase British responsibilities or to expose us to commitments more onerous than we could bear. He was prepared to treat the Egyptian nationalists in a moderate and even conciliatory spirit, but subject to two conditions. The first condition was that no foreign Power should be allowed to intervene as between Egypt and the British Empire.

The second condition was that essential British interests, such as the Sudan and the security of communication with India, should be guaranteed by more than merely adequate safeguards. It seemed to him, in that mood of triumphant confidence in which he entered upon his functions in 1919, that it would be no difficult matter to secure with Egypt an arrangement which, while safeguarding our interests, would accord to local nationalism every concession which could reasonably be desired. He regarded himself, at that time, as a liberal imperialist, enlightened and advanced. It seemed incredible to him that Oriental countries should not welcome as a gift of Providence the presence at the Foreign Office of a man of his knowledge, sympathy and understanding.

The reports which he at first received from the Residency in Cairo confirmed this optimism. In February 1919 they assured him that Egyptian nationalism was no very immediate menace; that Saad Pasha Zaghlul, the most formidable of the nationalist leaders, had been discredited; that the extent of the nationalist agitation had been much exaggerated; and that 'there seemed no reason why it should affect the decision of His Majesty's Government on constitutional questions or the proper form to be given to the Protectorate'. Theoretically, this forecast was intelligent and accurate. In practice, and within a few short weeks, it was disproved.

On March 1 the Cabinet of Rushdi Pasha resigned, and strikes, disturbances and riots ensued. The Residency advised firmness. Zaghlul and three other nationalist leaders were arrested and deported to Malta. On March 18 eight British subjects were murdered at

Deirut. The movement spread throughout the country : for some eight days a state of dangerous anarchy prevailed : martial law was proclaimed and it was only with great difficulty that General Bulfin, who had arrived to take command of the British forces of occupation, was able to restore order.

Meanwhile, in Paris, Mr. Lloyd George became perturbed. He decided that what was needed was a strong man and a liberal policy. In all haste and without consulting Lord Curzon he removed the existing High Commissioner, Sir Reginald Wingate, and appointed Lord Allenby in his place. The victor of Megiddo reached Cairo on March 25. By that time General Bulfin had practically suppressed the rebellion, although the final sparks were not extinguished until April 10. Lord Allenby decided to supplement authority by conciliation. On April 7 Zaghlul was released and left at once for Paris to lay his grievance before the Allied and Associated Powers. He was not well received and shortly afterwards President Wilson recognised the British Protectorate over Egypt. Lord Allenby's gesture had not, however, simplified the local situation. Rushdi Pasha consented again to assume power but within two weeks he was forced by the extremists to resign. Lord Allenby found himself obliged, by the end of April, himself to administer Egypt under the proclamation of martial law, which had subsisted since 1914. It was thereby rendered evident that the British could no longer govern Egypt from behind a screen of Egyptian ministers, and the issue was thus joined between authority, in the form of military administration, and consent.

The Cabinet in London, and Mr. Lloyd George in

Paris, were deeply perplexed. It was highly inconvenient to have to administer Egypt by force of arms. Yet to place the Wafd in power would lead inevitably to a demand for complete independence. For the moment they postponed their predicament by appointing a Commission which, under the chairmanship of Lord Milner, should proceed to Cairo and investigate conditions on the spot. The Milner Mission was constituted in May 1919: unfortunately it did not leave for Egypt until the following December.[1] Its terms of reference were 'to enquire into the causes of the late disorder in Egypt and the existing situation in the country and the form of constitution which, *under the Protectorate*, will be best calculated to promote its peace and prosperity, the progressive development of self-governing institutions and the protection of foreign interests'. From the first moment of its arrival the Milner Mission was boycotted by all Egyptians: pickets were placed outside their residence and any Egyptian who dared to visit them was exposed to menaces from the Wafd. In the hope of diminishing this opposition the mission, on December 29, 1919, issued a declaration in which they stated that they had come to Egypt 'to reconcile the aspirations of the Egyptian people with the special interests which Great Britain has in Egypt'. This declaration did not mitigate the hostility with which the mission was regarded.

Lord Lloyd, in the first volume of his *Egypt Since Cromer*, implies that Curzon, Lord Allenby and the Milner Mission were all at this stage guilty of vacillation. The British authorities should have realised

[1] The main reason for this postponement was that Lord Allenby did not want the mission to arrive until after peace had been signed with Turkey.

from the outset that no compromise was possible with Zaghlul or the Wafd, and should have concentrated upon creating an atmosphere of authority and order under which alone the more moderate Egyptian elements could be encouraged to support an Anglo-Egyptian agreement. As it was, we displayed that uncertainty of intention which is always interpreted by the Oriental as a sign of actual fear. At the very moment when General Bulfin's troops had restored order by force, Lord Allenby encouraged the extremists by releasing Zaghlul Pasha. The Milner Mission, having been despatched with instructions to suggest a settlement which would maintain the Protectorate, were so disturbed by the boycott against them that they described their own function as one 'to reconcile' Egyptian aspirations with British needs. No person can have imagined that their terms of reference, which were based upon the Protectorate, could possibly be reconciled with Egyptian aspirations, from which any form of Protectorate was certainly excluded. Such contradictions indicated lack of clarity and determination in London. Yet His Majesty's Government were not entirely to blame. They were, with good reason, playing for time, and the Milner Mission did in fact offer an excellent postponement. If Egypt had been their sole preoccupation, then clearly it would have been more honest and more wise to have dealt with Egypt frankly and at once. Yet at the time the British Government were preoccupied by many other more urgent problems both at home and abroad. It was quite natural, and indeed inevitable, that all decision should be delayed.

6

The Milner Mission returned to London in March of 1920. Their report was not issued until the following December. In the interval Lord Milner conducted negotiations with Adly and Zaghlul Pashas in London. These negotiations led to the memorandum of August 18, 1920, under which Lord Milner agreed to urge upon His Majesty's Government a definite scheme of settlement provided that Zaghlul Pasha would also urge its adoption upon his followers in Egypt. The settlement foreshadowed was one by which Great Britain would recognise the independence of Egypt, whereas Egypt in return would confer upon Great Britain 'such rights as are necessary to safeguard her special interests'. In particular Great Britain would be allowed to maintain a military force upon Egyptian soil, but this force was to be restricted to such localities as were essential to our imperial communications and was in no sense to prejudice the rights of the Egyptian Government or to imply an occupation of the country.

It is possible that had the Milner memorandum been accepted by the British Government as the basis of a final treaty with Egypt the whole Egyptian question might have been solved in 1920. Curzon himself was anxious for its acceptance. In a memorandum which he addressed to the Cabinet on October 11, 1920, he expressed general concurrence with Lord Milner's views. While admitting that the scheme outlined by Lord Milner went further than anything which had previously been contemplated, and while recognising that his proposals 'would not merely solve a difficulty but create a precedent', he urged that no solution would

ever be attained by a policy of half-measures. 'If we are to advance', he wrote, 'it must be a large advance in the direction, not merely of cooperation, but of trust'.

The Cabinet did not, however, agree with the Foreign Secretary. They considered that Lord Milner had far exceeded his terms of reference. They were further discouraged by the fact that Zaghlul Pasha, on arriving in Egypt, had himself shown no very marked enthusiasm for the Milner solution. They decided, therefore, that the Milner 'conversations' should be regarded as unofficial only. Curzon was obliged to accept this decision. An interval of ten months followed in which no progress was made.

The second stage of the Egyptian question opened in July 1921 when Adly Pasha, by that time Prime Minister, consented to come to London and resume negotiations. Curzon dealt with him direct. For hour after hour the two would discuss matters in that high corner room at the Foreign Office—Adly affable, vague and elusive, Curzon possessing sympathies for Adly's point of view which but seldom pierced through the steel casing of his unfortunately accurate manner. 'We had', he wrote to Lady Curzon on October 21, 'a very long Cabinet and I had to explain my Egyptian negotiations which are likely to lead to nothing. The Cabinet all much stiffer than I am in the matter, and I am sure we shall have an absolute rupture with another Ireland in Egypt.' The Cabinet could not understand. The Egyptians would not understand. Curzon, to himself, seemed a very Jacobin among imperialists. That view was shared at moments by certain of his Cabinet colleagues. Yet to the Egyptians, and to the popular

press, he remained the type of encased aristocrat; which was what he seemed; which was what, after all, he very rarely was. As a result the Adly negotiations led to no solution. Curzon was in the right; he was supported by Lord Allenby; he would have been supported, had he not been Curzon, by all advanced opinion. Yet he was not empowered to go quite as far as he and the Residency would have liked. In December 1921 Adly Pasha returned to Cairo and shortly afterwards resigned. No successor could be found to accept the onerous position of Egyptian Prime Minister and for a further stage the country was administered by the Egyptian Under-Secretaries in consultation with the British advisers and acting under martial law; a system which was far more abhorrent to the Residency and to Downing Street than to the Egyptian extremists themselves.

Before Adly Pasha's departure Curzon had embodied the result, or more accurately the stage, of their negotiations in his Note of November 10, 1921. In this memorandum he suggested the headings of a possible Convention between Great Britain and Egypt. We would agree to replace the declaration of a Protectorate by a 'perpetual treaty of peace, amity and alliance'. All we demanded was that Egypt, in her control of her own foreign relations, 'will not enter into any political agreement with foreign Powers without consultation with His Majesty's Government'. We also demanded the maintenance of British garrisons in Egypt. These two conditions Adly Pasha felt unable to accept.

The failure of these negotiations, to which so much time and patience had been devoted, was a grave dis-

appointment, not to Lord Curzon only, but also to the Prime Minister and Cabinet. The latter decided that a full defence and explanation of the attitude which the British Government had adopted should be prepared for publication. This statement took the form of a Note to be addressed by Lord Allenby to the Sultan of Egypt. This note reproached Egypt with ingratitude for all the benefits which, in peace and war, she had derived from the British connexion. It reminded Egypt that 'the freedom which she enjoys, and the prospect of higher freedom to which she aspires, she owes alike to British statesmanship and British arms', and it laid down the principle that 'until such time as Egypt's record gives confidence in her own guarantees, the British Empire must maintain sufficient guarantees itself. Of these, the presence of British troops in Egypt is the first and foremost. His Majesty's Government cannot waive or weaken it'.

This Note, which was dated December 3, 1921, was despatched by Lord Allenby to the Sultan of Egypt and thereafter published. It produced in Egypt a most unfortunate effect. Even in England it was criticised in some quarters as typical of Lord Curzon's methods of tactless and didactic recrimination. This was an unfair criticism. Curzon was not directly responsible for the Note of December 3. It had not even been drafted in the Foreign Office. The draft was prepared in the secretariat of Mr. Lloyd George. It was, however, submitted before despatch for Lord Curzon's approval. He gave that approval. He cannot therefore disclaim all responsibility for its unfortunate results.[1]

[1] See Sir Valentine Chirol, 'Four Years of Lloyd-Georgian Foreign Policy', *Edinburgh Review*, January 1923.

On the receipt of this admonition Adly Pasha, as has already been noted, resigned. Four days later Zaghlul was again arrested and deported to the Seychelles Islands. It was not till January 12, 1922, that Sarwat Pasha consented to form a Ministry provided that the abolition of the Protectorate were first accepted as a preliminary to, and not as condition of, the proposed treaty. An excited, and in some cases an hysterical, period ensued. Lord Allenby contended that the British Government were morally pledged to the abolition of the Protectorate by the terms of the Milner Report. The British Government replied that they had from the first refused to be bound by the statements included in that report. Lord Allenby threatened to resign. He went further. He despatched Mr. Walford Selby, Counsellor of the Residency, in person to London. He followed Mr. Selby in his own person.

The ensuing situation was dealt with by Lord Curzon with indignation but with ingenuity. The threat of resignation on the part of a popular and liberal-minded Field-Marshal filled him with reminiscent alarm. At the same time he was convinced that any useful negotiations with the Egyptians would, in their present frame of mind, be impossible. He decided, therefore, upon unilateral action. The Egyptians had invoked world-opinion: Great Britain would do the same. With one hand he would offer Egypt her independence: with the other hand he would make it clear both to the Egyptians and to foreign Powers that the conditions of that independence were for settlement between Great Britain and Egypt alone. There must be an end to compromise and negotiation. We would

state our requirements firmly and plainly. And leave it at that.

Having decided upon this policy of unilateral action he at once carried it into effect. On February 28, 1922, he published a manifesto in which he declared that Great Britain was willing to recognise the independence of Egypt and to regard the Protectorate as abolished. He added that pending a final treaty between the two parties certain points were 'absolutely reserved to the discretion of His Majesty's Government'. These reserved points included the security of imperial communications, the defence of Egypt against all foreign intervention direct or indirect, the 'protection' of foreign interests and minorites,[1] and the status of the Sudan.

He followed up this manifesto by a circular Note to foreign Powers. It was dated March 15, 1922. In this Note he established a Monroe doctrine for Egypt. He warned foreign Powers that the abolition of the British Protectorate would involve no change as regards the position of other Powers in Egypt itself. His Majesty's Government would 'always maintain as an essential British interest the special relations between itself and Egypt long recognised by other Governments'. Great Britain would not 'admit (these special relations) to be questioned or discussed by any other Power'. In pursuance of this principle His Majesty's Government would regard as 'an unfriendly act' any attempt at intervention in the affairs of Egypt by another Power—'and they will consider any aggression against

[1] This was perhaps an unfortunate reservation since it committed us to the maintenance of the capitulations. Now that the capitulations have been abolished in Turkey, and even in Persia, their maintenance in Egypt is somewhat illogical.

the territory of Egypt as an act to be repelled by all the means at their command '.

By this decisive gesture Curzon arrested the process of liquefaction which threatened to dissolve the remaining vestiges of our position in Egypt. It was his last contribution to the Anglo-Egyptian problem. He failed to solve that problem, and, in the atmosphere of the time, it was probably insoluble. But at least he had the intelligence and the courage to break away from profitless negotiation and to fix the limits where unreality ended and reality began. In spite of subsequent operations the Curzon limits have remained fixed to this day.

NOTE.—It has been pointed out that the above account does insufficient justice to the prescience of Lord Allenby, who was the first (in the summer of 1921) to suggest the 'unilateral solution'. Curzon began by supporting Allenby, then joined the majority of the Cabinet in opposing the Field-Marshal's proposals, and only resumed his support of the 'unilateral solution' after Lord Allenby had, by his determined attitude, won Mr. Lloyd George over to his side.

Chapter VII

DIPLOMACY BY CONFERENCE

1920-1922

The fallacy implicit in any contrast between 'new' and 'old' diplomacy —This contrast one of method rather than of principle—Technical weaknesses to which democratic diplomacy is peculiarly exposed—Those weaknesses increased by diplomacy by conference—Extent to which post-war diplomacy indulged in this unfortunate method—Results of that indulgence—Lloyd George as a democratic diplomatist—Curzon's failure to mitigate the falsity of the Prime Minister's perspective—This failure due to the rigidity of Curzon's faith and the defects of his temperament—Instances of their inability to distinguish between essential maladies and the incidental symptoms of those maladies—French security —The Kapp putsch—Syria—The Polish incident—Consequent estrangement between Great Britain and France increased by attitude of Lloyd George upon such questions as Russia—The Silesian plebiscite—The Commissions of control—As a result of our unreliability France seeks her security in isolated action—The Little Entente—Sanctions—Effect of this upon British policy in general and Curzon in person—His increasing resentment of Mr. Lloyd George.

I

A TENDENCY has arisen in recent years, and especially in the United States, to contrast what is described as 'new' or 'open' diplomacy with what is called 'old' or 'secret' diplomacy. In its more extreme forms this contrast implies a contention that until the coming of President Wilson diplomacy was oligarchic, maleficent and obscure; whereas, after the Revelation of January 8, 1918, it suddenly became democratic, beneficent and limpid. This theory (in that it is often based upon superstitious rather than upon rational conceptions) leads to errors of understanding. It has given rise, for

instance, to the idea that there exists some antinomy between democratic control on the one hand; and on the other hand, the secret and expert conduct of negotiation. It has given rise, again, to a widespread conception of diplomacy as something which possesses a detached identity of its own—parasitic, and not organic, to the living growth of the State. Such theories are misleading. The history of diplomacy displays no such sudden breaks in continuity: it shows, rather, a constant, if not very immediate, process of adjustment to the shifting incidences of sovereignty. A diplomatic service which was unrepresentative of the sovereign authority in its own national State would obviously be an inefficient service. Diplomacy may thus be defined as that method of international procedure which commends itself to sensible persons of any given epoch, as the most 'representative' and the most 'efficient' for conducting negotiations between States. Its efficiency must be based upon a constant endeavour to secure that international intercourse be conducted in such a manner as to minimise the risks of misunderstanding, emotionalism, uncertainty or hasty decision. It is the interaction between the need of exact 'representation' and the impulse towards increased 'efficiency' which has, since the fourteenth century, constituted the main influence formative of diplomatic practice: the conflict between the 'old' and the 'new' diplomacy is thus no sudden phenomenon, but a stage in this long process of adjustment presented (as all modern problems are presented) in an increasingly intricate, impatient and ill-digested form.

Although, therefore, great caution should be exercised when basing any thesis upon some contrast be-

tween 'old' and 'new', between 'pre-war' and 'post-war', diplomacy, yet it must be confessed that the triumph of the democratic idea (temporary though that triumph may prove) has in fact induced a marked difference of method, even if but a slight difference of purpose. The fact that the people is now sovereign in all democratic countries obliges the negotiator to inform the people of his purposes and to obtain their approval of his decisions. This, in principle, is a wholly admirable necessity. In practice, it is a most irksome obligation. The difficulty of inducing the people to think rapidly and correctly,—the danger that their initial emotion may, although rapid, be incorrect —tempts the modern negotiator to avoid those problems which are likely to prove unpopular and to concentrate on secondary issues which will be more comprehensible, and therefore more welcome, to the popular mind.

The main distinction, therefore, between the methods of the new and those of the old diplomacy is that the former aims at satisfying the *immediate* wishes of the electorate, whereas the latter was concerned only with the *ultimate* interests of the nation. It is, very largely, a difference in the time available. The old diplomatist, negotiating as an expert with fellow experts, was able to approach his problems in a scientific spirit, with due deliberation, and without regard to immediate popular support. Such a system was obviously open to abuse and danger. Yet democratic diplomacy is exposed to its own peculiar maladies which, in that they are less apparent, are even more insidious. In its desire to conciliate popular feeling it is apt to subordinate principle to expediency, to sub-

stitute the indefinite for the precise, to prefer in place of the central problem (which is often momentarily insoluble) subsidiary issues upon which immediate agreement, and therefore immediate popular approval, can be attained.

Exposed as it was to these particular infections it may seem strange that post-war diplomacy should have selected as its favourite method of negotiation the one of all others most calculated to breed the germs and bacilli of these very diseases. The old diplomatists, even when representing the most enlightened sovereign, regarded 'diplomacy by conference' as a highly dangerous method, and one to be attempted only after careful preliminary preparation and for the discussion of precise and specific issues. The new diplomatists took to diplomacy by conference as wild geese to water. Twenty-three separate international conferences were held between January 1920 and December 1922. They were held in circumstances of great publicity, of intense popular expectancy, and acute personal exhaustion. They were disturbing, dangerous and expensive. The Conference of Genoa alone cost the British taxpayer £7000. Yet their great fault was that they exposed democratic diplomacy to those very dangers and temptations which it was least able to resist. The very importance of these conferences rendered it necessary that they should be conducted, not by professional diplomatists or experts, but by politicians sensitive to parliamentary and popular opinion in their own countries. The technical nature of the problems, the actual variety of the issues, imposed upon these negotiators a mental and physical strain such as the human body is incapable of with-

MEETING OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL IN THE SALLE DE L'HORLOGE AT THE QUAI D'ORSAY, 1920

Centre table left to right: M. Jules Cambon, M. Loucheur, M. Tardieu, M. Klotz, M. Clemenceau, Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Bonar Law, Lord Curzon.

standing. They demanded on the part of their public a degree of education, balance, and general awareness which that public did not, to any adequate extent, possess. The actual pressure of public expectation and time-shortage (for what Prime Minister can remain for long absent from his own country?) excluded all possibility of careful deliberation or gradual sifting of possibilities. Is it surprising that in such circumstances, in such an atmosphere, the negotiators should again and again have evaded the central problem and dealt only with subsidiary manifestations of that problem? Is it surprising that they should have preferred temporary dressings to the awkward and unwelcome necessity of a major surgical operation? Is it surprising that they expended upon minor controversies, upon petty concessions, that energy which they should have reserved for the great conflicts of principle? Is it surprising that they proved evasive, imprecise, timid, empirical, and unconstructive?[1]

2

The Treaty of Peace with Germany was ratified on January 10, 1920, and on January 21 the Peace Conference came to its official end. Its executive functions were thereafter entrusted to a body known as 'The Ambassadors' Conference' composed of the representatives in Paris of the five Great Powers and meeting almost daily in the Quai d'Orsay under the chairmanship of M. Jules Cambon.[2] The Ambassadors'

[1] For a contemporary exposition of the dangers of diplomacy by conference see D'Abernon, *An Ambassador of Peace*, vol. i, p. 163.

[2] M. Jules Cambon, b. 1845; French Ambassador in Madrid, from where he was transferred to Berlin, 1907-1914; Secretary-General of Quai d'Orsay under M. Briand; a member of French Delegation at the Peace Conference;

Conference has been criticised as too subservient to French atmosphere and influence. This criticism is unfair. It is true that the French controlled the machinery of the Conference, and that the foreign Ambassadors were naturally disinclined to obstruct at every point the wishes of the Government to which they were accredited. On the other hand, M. Cambon was a wise and liberal European, nor did he make use of his position to serve the sole interests of France. The work accomplished by the Conference of Ambassadors was comprehensive, on the whole conciliatory, and sound.

The deliberative, as distinct from the executive, functions of the Peace Conference remained vested in the hands of the Prime Ministers of the four principal Allies. As a method of conducting these deliberations they chose, as has been explained, 'diplomacy by conference'. Nine conferences were held in 1920, seven in 1921, and seven in 1922. In order to avoid subsequent confusion and to show the range of these deliberations it will be convenient to tabulate the more important of these conferences and to indicate the main problems with which they dealt.

1920. (1) *Paris Conference.* January 8-16.

(*a*) Adriatic dispute.
(*b*) Organisation of military controls.
(*c*) List of war criminals.
(*d*) Request sent to Holland for extradition of William II.
(*e*) Russian co-operatives allowed to export grain.

witty, wise, conciliatory, high-minded, disillusioned. Perhaps the most intelligent of all French pre-war diplomatists. Not to be confused with his elder brother M. Paul Cambon, the Ambassador in Londo[illegible].

1920. (2) *London Conference.* February 12-23.

(*a*) Turkey to retain Constantinople.

(*b*) Lloyd George-Millerand Note to Wilson on Fiume.

(*c*) General economic and financial situation.

(3) *San Remo Conference.* April 19-26.

(*a*) Treaty of Sèvres drawn up.

(*b*) Syrian and Iraq mandates allotted.

(*c*) Cadman-Berthelot oil agreement.

(*d*) League of Nations refuses to accept mandate for Armenia.

(*e*) German situation. The Kapp putsch: French occupation of Frankfurt and Darmstadt; Germans ask permission to double strength of their army: this refused and Germany charged with default on Reparation.

(4) *First Lympne Conference.* May 15-17.
Reparation.

(5) *Second Lympne Conference.* June 19-20.
Turkish nationalist menace. Venizelos offers co-operation of Greek army. Offer accepted.

(6) *Boulogne Conference.* June 21-22.
Reparation. Experts prepare Spa programme.

(7) *Spa Conference.* July 5-16.

(*a*) Reparations. Fehrenbach, Simons and Wirth present. Stinnes truculent about coal deliveries. Military sanctions against Germany considered. Inter-allied percentages laid down in protocol of July 16.

(*b*) Polish question. Grabski and Patek.

(8) *Brussels Conference of Experts.* December.
Reparation.

1921. (1) *Paris Conference.* January 24-30.

(*a*) Reparation.
(*b*) Disarmament.
(*c*) Greeks and Turks invited to London.

(2) *London Conference.* February 21-March 14.

(*a*) Reparation. Dr. Simons present. He refuses to abide by Paris recommendations. On March 3 Lloyd George delivers an ultimatum. Sanctions applied and Düsseldorf, Duisberg, Ruhrort occupied by Allied troops. Customs cordon established between occupied territory and rest of Germany.

(*b*) Graeco-Turkish dispute. No agreement reached with Turks.

(3) *Third Lympne Conference.* April 23-24.

Lloyd George and Briand discuss further sanctions against Germany, including even occupation of the Ruhr.

(4) *London Conference.* April 29-May 5.

Attended by Reparation Commission.
Schedule of payments drawn up and presented to Germans under threat that Ruhr will be occupied in the event of refusal. German Government resign. Wirth reforms his Cabinet and accepts ultimatum on May 11.

(5) *Paris Conference.* June 19.

Attempt to mediate between Greeks and Turks.

(6) *Paris Conference.* August 8-13.

(*a*) Upper Silesia.
(*b*) Graeco-Turkish War.
(*c*) War criminals.
(*d*) Disarmament.

1921. (7) *London Conference.* December 18-22.

(*a*) Reparation.
(*b*) Security.
(*c*) Reconstruction.

1922. (1) *Cannes Conference.* January 6-13.

(*a*) Security. Lloyd George offers Anglo-French pact on certain conditions. Briand insists that it be accompanied by technical military convention. Briand summoned to Paris January 11 and resigns January 13. Poincaré forms Government.
(*b*) Programme of Genoa Conference.
(*c*) Reparation. Rathenau present.

(2) *Boulogne Conference.* February 25.
Agenda of Genoa Conference.

(3) *Paris Conference.* March 22-26.
Graeco-Turkish War. Allies offer Turkey modifications of Treaty of Sèvres.

(4) *Genoa Conference.* April 10-May 19.
Attended by Dominions and twenty-nine European States, including Russia.
Lloyd George's attempt at world co-operation. Germans sign separate Treaty of Rapallo with Russia.

(5) *Hague Conference.* June 26-July 20.
Conference of financial experts on reparation.

(6) *London Conference.* August 7-14.
Reparation.

(7) *First Lausanne Conference.* November 20-February 4, 1923.

To deal with these successive and overlapping conferences in chronological order would be to inflict

upon the reader a strain beyond the powers of human endurance. The conference era will thus be discussed in terms of what was its most important diplomatic result—in terms, that is, of the estrangement between France and Great Britain.

3

One of the most constant traditions of British diplomacy is that an alliance loses its validity so soon as common victory has been achieved.[1] In the days when we were still governed by a territorial aristocracy that repudiation was disguised under the formula of chivalry towards the stricken foe. In 1919 so palliative a formula was difficult to proclaim. Chivalry, at such a date, would have been regarded by our Press and public as reactionary, 'pro-German', highbrow and out of date. The balance of power, owing to the mistaken theories of prominent publicists, was not a principle which by then could openly be invoked. There was in fact no popular principle to which Mr. Lloyd George could at the moment appeal. He decided to appeal to no principles. The tide of tradition pulled him away from France and towards Germany and Russia. The tide of public opinion was still set against Germany and in the wake of France. He decided to go in one direction while pretending that he was going in another. He realised that if his right hand were allowed to know what his left hand was doing, his right hand might begin to interfere. He saw that to provoke a conflict of principle would end by provoking parliamentary opposition. He readily concluded that he could only

[1] We thus, after the European wars of 1792-1815, joined with France against Russia and Prussia upon the Saxon and Polish questions.

attain his objectives (and they were right objectives) by creeping through devious paths. And in so doing, he strayed sadly among the hedgerows, and wasted valuable months of time.

Lord Curzon, at such a juncture, should have helped him with historical knowledge, patrician detachment, and extended views. He failed to help him. He, also, possessed the traditional British instinct for the balance of continental power. He also realised that it was not a British interest to leave France isolated and supreme upon the continent. Yet being a man of academic aptitudes rather than of constructive vision—being a historian rather than a man of action—he was seldom able to transmute his knowledge of the past, his analysis of the present, into any proposals for the future. Again and again would Curzon quote recondite precedents, and summarise with astonishing mastery the elements as well as the antedecents of the problem before him: yet when asked what future action he suggested, he would lean back in his chair, petulantly disconcerted, and gaze with injured indignation at the realist who had dared to advance so material an enquiry.

Nor was this all. Curzon, as has already been stated, was a bad European. His attitude towards continental affairs was governed by those prejudices and egoisms which affected the average Englishman of the upper-middle classes towards the close of the nineteenth century. His ideal world would have been one in which England never intervened in Europe and Europe never intervened in Africa or Asia. America, as a distant, even if rebellious, plantation, was in either case not expected to intervene at all. His conceptions of the

European problem were thus egoistic, traditional and limited. Let England have peace upon the continent and therefore an expanding market. Let England have the balance of power on the continent, and thereby security at other people's expense. Such was his political philosophy in regard to European affairs. It was not, in the circumstances of 1919, a very helpful philosophy.

In the proportions of power then obtaining it should have been realised that France, if she did not obtain security, would act alone. It should have been realised that British public opinion was not, at that date, sufficiently educated to oppose such action. And it should have been realised that the only policy was to provide France (that profoundly defensive country) with some reliable alternative for security, other than the Rhine frontier, if France were to be prevented from twisting the treaty into an even more Carthaginian shape.

Curzon was precluded from such realisations, not only by the rigidities of his faith, but also by the defects of his temperament. He was not among those who realise the vital importance of French culture to the whole system of Western civilisation. He refused, rather obstinately, to understand the sincere pacifism which lies at the root of the French yearning for security. His attitude towards France—as indeed to all our rivals in the Great Power system—was essentially competitive. He resented the precision, the lucidity, the deductive reasoning of the French as an impudent parody of qualities which he regarded as especially his own. He objected to their nimbleness and apparent lack of reverence as a degradation of those

Roman virtues which they claimed to have inherited. He considered their endeavours to compete with Great Britain in Africa and Asia as pretentious and unjustified. Had he not, with his own eyes, noted the defects of the French administration of Cochin China in 1892? Had he not himself been concerned in curbing their unwarranted ambitions at Muscat? It was thus from an angle of irritated personal competitiveness that Curzon approached all French demands.

This, in 1920, was an unfortunate angle. Had Curzon realised that, unless we could give the French some compensation for the loss of the Rhine frontier, some alternative to the Anglo-American guarantee of 1919, we should in every single matter find them obstructive, disloyal, and dangerous, then we might well have had a Locarno before it was too late.

As it was, he encouraged Mr. Lloyd George in one controversy after another. Until he himself reaped the sad harvest of estrangement in embittered personal combat with M. Poincaré.

Curzon, with all his high ideals, with all his brilliant attainments, will never rank among the most creative of our Foreign Secretaries. This failure can be ascribed to his deficient sense of proportion. He should have realised that French security was the basis of the whole European system. It was a basis in regard to which we ourselves were in a false position. Realising that falsity, Curzon winced away from the basis. It was owing to his disinclination, or inability, to face this central reality that other, wholly secondary, differences acquired such disproportionate value.

The root-cause of Anglo-French rivalry, of the suspicions and animosities which thereafter arose, was in

fact this problem of French security. That problem can be stated in simple terms. The French were aware of three very disquieting and unescapable factors. First, that the Franco-German frontier extends for more than three hundred miles. Secondly, that the Germans are a self-conscious and neurotic nation, and at moments bellicose. Thirdly, that whereas the population of France is a decreasing forty-one million, that of Germany is rapidly increasing from a total of sixty-two-and-a-half million.

Having in 1918 achieved over Germany a victory more overwhelming even than the Prussian victory of 1871, the French nation supposed, and not unnaturally, that the ensuing peace would give them that permanent security for which they yearned. They thought inevitably of the Rhine frontier. 'Ce fleuve', said Marshal Foch, 'règle tout'. It could not, however, regulate the Fourteen Points of President Wilson. Great Britain and the United States were obliged to purchase a French relinquishment of the Rhine frontier by the offer of alternative guarantees.

These guarantees assumed two forms. On the one hand, the Treaty of Versailles imposed certain servitudes upon Germany—such as perpetual disarmament, the demilitarisation of the Rhineland areas, and the occupation of the Rhine frontier for periods of from five to fifteen years. On the other hand Great Britain and the United States pledged themselves to come to the assistance of France 'in the event of any unprovoked movement of aggression against her being made by Germany'. Two separate but analogous treaties embodying this pledge were signed, by the United States on the one hand, by Great Britain on the other.

Article 4 of the American treaty provided that its terms would have to be submitted to the United States Senate 'for its advice and consent to ratification'. Article 2 of the British treaty laid down that our engagements thereunder would only become operative once Congress had ratified the Franco-American treaty of even date. The United States rejected that treaty on November 19, 1919. We ratified our own treaty on the following day. Yet in view of the refusal of Congress to confirm President Wilson's pledge, our own pledge ceased, under Article 2, to be legally binding.

The French were thus left with a reasonable grievance. They had renounced those physical guarantees to which their victory entitled them in return for the moral guarantees promised by America and Great Britain. Each of these two countries, with varying degrees of justification, repudiated these promises. France, having sacrificed the substance for the shadow, found that even the shadow had been withdrawn. Her resentment at this betrayal lasted until the fall of Poincaré in June of 1924.

Two alternative policies were open to Great Britain in that January of 1920. The first was to support Germany and to work with full determination for a modification of the Treaty of Versailles. Such a policy, in view of the state of British opinion, was not at that date feasible. The second policy was to prevent France undertaking isolated action on the continent by rendering her security dependent, not upon her own force and influence alone, but upon close cooperation with Great Britain. This policy, in that it would have entailed a specific Treaty of Guarantee, would also

have been unpopular. Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Curzon had not the courage to face the problem in terms of two such drastic alternatives. They endeavoured—as is the way with democratic diplomatists—to secure the advantages of both policies without raising the inconvenient principles implicit in either. They maintained the fiction of an Anglo-French alliance while hesitating, until it was too late, to give to the alliance that solid basis of security by which alone it could have been rendered an instrument of pacification. They accorded Germany intermittent support and encouragement in matters, such as Silesia, where our own interests were not endangered; they treated her as a conquered victim in all matters, such as the mercantile marine, or the costs of occupation, with which the British elector was concerned. They thus sacrificed the moral authority which would have secured for them a mediatory position, and they thereby drove France into isolated action; and Germany into suicidal despair.

Their difficulties, it must be emphasised, were overwhelming. It may be questioned whether, at the time, it would in fact have been possible to surmount those difficulties. The criticism is, rather, that they did not realise these difficulties in their true proportions and that a diplomatic error was committed in dealing separately and discontinuously with such minor questions as Silesia, Turkey, Poland, Syria, and even Reparation, on the basis of an assumed continuance of the alliance between France and Great Britain, when any satisfactory solution of these problems was quite impossible except by the restoration of the alliance in such terms as would give French opinion a sense of

security. This error of diagnosis is a common feature in all democratic diplomacy. The central and original cause of illness is too painful to admit or even to contemplate. The manifestations and symptoms of that illness are thus dealt with as if they were the illness itself. And great indignation is expressed when the patient refuses to respond to treatment.

4

The first serious incident was provided by the Kapp 'putsch' of March 1920, which was an attempt on the part of the German reactionaries to oust the Republican Government of Herr Bauer.[1] Although the Kapp *coup d'état* failed, yet it led to disturbances throughout Germany and in particular to a communist rising in the Ruhr. On March 19, 1920, the Bauer Government asked permission to move regular troops into Rhenish Westphalia for the purpose of suppressing this rising. The British Government were in favour of granting this permission. The French Government insisted upon the integral maintenance of Articles 42 and 43 of the Treaty of Versailles, under which no regular German troops were in any circum-

[1] Although we are not concerned with German internal politics, a few leading dates may be useful as signposts. The Revolution rendered Germany a Social-Democratic Republic with Herr Ebert as President and a Coalition Government which contained Bauer, Noske and Erzberger. The Weimar Constitution was passed in July 1919 and the first elections under that constitution were held in June 1920. They led to a weakening in the central groups and a strengthening of the extreme right and left. A series of weak coalitions followed: (1) Fehrenbach Cabinet, July 1920-May 1921. Simons Foreign Secretary. (2) Wirth Cabinet, May 1921-October 1921. Rosen Foreign Secretary. (3) Second Wirth Cabinet. November 1921. Rathenau Foreign Secretary. Latter murdered June 24, 1922. Cabinet falls, November 14, 1922. (4) Cuno Cabinet, November 1922-August 1923. (5) Stresemann Cabinet, August 1923-November 1923. (6) Marx Cabinet, December 1923. Stresemann Foreign Secretary.

stances to enter the demilitarised zones. On April 3 the Germans, without waiting for Allied permission, despatched some 20,000 armed troops into the Ruhr. The French countered on April 6 by occupying the towns of Frankfurt and Darmstadt. These penalties, or 'sanctions', had been enacted without British knowledge or concurrence. Lord Curzon at once sent for the French Ambassador and informed him that such action on the part of his Government was 'incompatible with that mutual understanding and that common action upon which the stability of the alliance and the security of Europe alike depend'. M. Paul Cambon[1] was much distressed by this intimation and by the asperity of tone in which it was delivered. He stated that in his twenty-two years as Ambassador in London Lord Curzon's communication was the 'most painful and serious' with which he had been faced. Not long afterwards, foreseeing further incidents of a like nature, this veteran diplomatist resigned. He was succeeded by Monsieur de Saint Aulaire. Meanwhile the French apologised to the British Government for having acted without their concurrence and on May 17 the German troops, having restored order, were withdrawn from the Ruhr basin. The incident was closed.

Other difficulties had meanwhile arisen. The San Remo Conference of April 19-26, 1920, had disclosed a fundamental divergence of view in regard to Reparation. Mr. Lloyd George desired negotiation with Germany upon the payment of a 'lump sum'. M. Mille-

[1] M. Paul Cambon, b. 1843; Ambassador in Constantinople and transferred to London in 1898, where he remained as Ambassador for twenty-two years, resigning in November 1920. The main artificer of the Anglo-French Entente and subsequent alliance. A silent, glaucous-eyed, imperturbable and elegant diplomatist possessed of great judgment, integrity, and influence.

rand [1] refused all negotiation and insisted upon the 'cat-and-mouse' policy established by the Treaty of Versailles. The main outlines of the Reparation dispute will be sketched in the following chapter; for the moment it is necessary only to record that the first serious signs of the coming cleavage on this question can be dated from the same week as the dispute over the Frankfurt occupation.

Ill-feeling was also caused during this period by events in Syria. Reference has already been made in Section 3 of Chapter IV to the difficult position in which we found ourselves owing to the conflicting promises which we had made to the Arabs and the French. In September 1919 an agreement had been reached under which we promised to withdraw Allenby's troops from Syria so soon as peace had been signed with the Turks, and the French promised that they would allow the Arabs to occupy the Damascus-Homs-Hama line which, under the Sykes-Picot agreement, had been reserved for the future Arab State. The situation was complicated by the presence in Damascus of the Emir Feisal who, in spite of our entreaties, was unwilling to submit himself to French guidance. In December 1919 the British troops were withdrawn. In January 1920 French prestige in the East suffered a severe blow owing to the defeat inflicted on them at Marash in Cilicia by the Turkish nationalists. On March 10, 1920, the Syrian notables offered the Emir Feisal the crown of a united Syria and Palestine. Both the French and British Governments refused to recog-

[1] Alexandre Millerand, b. 1859; 1912 Minister of War, a post he resumed from 1914-1915. In 1919 appointed Commissioner General in Alsace-Lorraine. Succeeded Clemenceau as Prime Minister in 1919. Elected President of the Republic in September 1920.

nise this gesture of Arab nationalism; at San Remo they agreed that Iraq and Palestine should be given as a mandate to Great Britain and that Syria should go to France. The Syrians, and Feisal, were unwilling to accept this partition of their empire. By July 1920, however, the French had regained control over Cilicia and had landed in Syria some 90,000 men. Thus enforced, they addressed to Feisal an ultimatum which, in spite of his own acquiescence, was rejected by the Syrian notables. Hostilities ensued; the Syrians were routed; and Damascus was occupied by General Gouraud on July 25, 1920. Feisal was deposed and the French, by right of conquest, then occupied the Homs-Hama-Damascus line which had been promised to the Arabs. Indignation was caused both in Paris and London by this unfortunate affair. We regarded the French as having violated the agreement of September 1919. They regarded us as having encouraged Amir Feisal and as being responsible for the whole disturbance. Their indignation was not allayed when, in August 1921, the Emir Feisal, with our approval, was chosen King of Iraq.

The fourth incident which occurred in 1920 created even more suspicion and resentment. It arose over Poland and is so characteristic of the methods of British post-war diplomacy that it merits a section to itself.

5

The eastern frontier of Poland had not, in its whole extent, been defined by the Treaty of Versailles. The Poles had remained upon the line evacuated by the German armies and, if they thought of an eastern fron-

tier, they thought of it in terms of the historic frontier of 1772. Until the spring of 1920 the Soviet Government were too occupied in suppressing the counter-revolutionary movements of Denikin and Koltchak to give much attention to their relations with their Polish neighbour. By May of 1920, however, both Denikin and Koltchak had collapsed and the Poles (in defiance of the advice given them by the Supreme Council on February 24, 1920) entered into an agreement with the Ukraine in the hopes of creating out of that vague unit a buffer State between themselves and the Bolsheviks which would include Odessa and the Donetz basin. In pursuit of this ambition they invaded Russia and occupied Kieff. In June of 1920 came the Russian counter-attack. The Poles were driven out of Kieff and the Soviet armies advanced on Warsaw. It was at this stage that the Polish ministers, M. Grabski and M. Patek, appealed for assistance to the Concert of Europe. They found that Concert disunited.

The French, in spite of their pro-Polish sympathies, were unwilling at first to take a leading part in the ensuing controversy. Poland had been in the wrong in attacking Russia and the French socialists, incensed by the abortive expedition to Odessa, were in a critical mood. The onus of mediation fell upon Mr. Lloyd George, who had never been guilty of pro-Polish sentiments and whose personal record in regard to intervention against the Soviet had been comparatively clear. It was at Spa that M. Grabski found Lloyd George and Curzon. In the previous May a Russian Trade Delegation headed by M. Kameneff and M. Krassin had arrived in London. They lost little time in establishing contact with the left wing of the

Labour Party and in exerting pressure upon the Government. The slogan 'Hands off Russia' began to appear even in the Conservative press.

Neither Mr. Lloyd George nor Lord Curzon had much sympathy with M. Grabski. On the one hand he had ignored the advice of the Supreme Council and had lent a willing ear to the counsels of those French officials who had encouraged the Ukrainian scheme. On the other hand he had become the cause of a parliamentary difficulty in England. The 'Council of Action' of the British Labour Party were openly anti-Polish in their pronouncements. Mr. Bevin went so far as to threaten a general strike were the British Government to assist Poland 'directly or indirectly'. On July 10 Mr. Lloyd George interviewed M. Grabski alone. He abused the Poles for having advanced into Russian and Ukrainian territory and he ordered them to withdraw some 125 miles behind the line which they at that moment occupied. This would bring them to their 'legitimate frontier'. M. Grabski enquired where that frontier lay. Mr. Lloyd George then indicated what has since been known as 'the Curzon line' —(although Curzon himself had little to do with it)— namely a line running from Grodno through Bialystock, Brest-Litovsk and Przemysl to the Carpathians. This was something very different from the frontier of 1772. M. Grabski expressed dissent. Mr. Lloyd George then assured him that if the Poles retired to the Curzon line, and if the Russians subsequently crossed it, then 'the British Government and their Allies would be bound to help Poland with all the means at their disposal'. This intimation, and the frontier it comprised, were then telegraphed to Moscow with a


FINLAND
Leningrad
RUSSIA
Stockholm
SWEDEN
ESTHONIA
BALTIC
SEA
Courland
Riga
LATVIA
Moscow
EAST
PRUSSIA
LITHUANIA
Danzig
Vilna
U.S.S.R.
Berlin
Grodno
Bialystock
Warsaw
GERMANY
Curzon Line
Present frontiers of Poland
established by Treaty of Riga
Polish Eastern Frontier before 1772
Brest Litovsk
POLAND
Upper
Silesia
CZECHO-
Lemberg
Kiev
UKRAINE
SLOVAKIA
AUSTRIA
HUNGARY
ROUMANIA

request that representatives of the Soviet Government should proceed to London to negotiate terms of peace. The French Government refused to join in this communication since it would have implied official recognition of the Soviet Government. Lenin also refused to respond, stating that he preferred to negotiate with the Poles direct. The Russian armies, therefore, continued to advance.

On July 20 Lord Curzon addressed to Moscow a communication in which he made it clear that the Allies would come to the aid of Poland if the Russian forces crossed the Curzon line. Wittingly or unwittingly the Bolshevik forces crossed that line at Nowy Dvor on July 24. They advanced beyond it and then they paused while they communicated with the Trade Delegation in London. Was Lord Curzon bluffing? M. Kameneff and M. Krassin replied in the affirmative. The Russian armies advanced into the heart of Poland and converged on Warsaw. An inter-allied commission was sent hurriedly to Poland. Its civilian members were Lord D'Abernon and M. Jusserand. Its military members were Generals Radcliffe and Weygand.[1] This mission arrived in Warsaw on July 25 to find the Russian armies within twelve miles of the Polish capital. Four days later the Poles sued for an armistice and preliminary negotiations were opened at Minsk. The Russians offered Poland a frontier far more favourable than that of the Curzon line but added to this offer a condition that the Poles should reduce their army to 50,000 and create a gen-

[1] General Max Weygand, b. 1867; Chief of the Staff to Marshal Foch; High Commissioner in Syria, 1924; now Commander-in-Chief of the French Armies

darmerie of 200,000 to which only trades-union members would be eligible. Their intention was to render Poland a European Azerbaijan. News of this offer and its attendant condition reached the Allied statesmen assembled in conference at Lympne. Mr. Lloyd George, who had been furnished by Mr. Krassin with an incomplete and misleading text, pronounced the offer generous in the extreme and urged compliance upon Poland.[1] M. Millerand thought otherwise. He pressed that munitions should at once be despatched to aid the Poles. He telegraphed to General Wrangel, who had started a counter-revolutionary movement in the Crimea, recognising his authority and promising assistance. And he encouraged General Weygand at Warsaw to galvanise Polish resistance. The latter, after much obstruction on the part of Marshal Pilsudski, had already persuaded the Poles to counter-attack. His strategy was brilliantly successful. The Russian tide began to ebb. Mr. Lloyd George hurriedly issued a pronouncement to the effect that the Russian offer at Minsk was not generous at all, but was in fact incompatible with Polish independence. His announcement was belated. The Russian armies had by then been routed and Poland was able to dictate an eventual treaty (signed at Riga on October 12, 1920) which doubled the area given them by the Curzon line and raised her population to twenty-seven millions.[2]

The imprecisions of British post-war diplomacy are

[1] An account of how Mr. Lloyd George received M. Krassin's message while playing golf at Cobham, and how he at once acted thereon without any consultation with the Foreign Office, is given by Lord Riddell in his *Intimate Diary*, p. 225.

[2] An extremely fair and vivid account of these dramatic events is given in Lord D'Abernon's *The Eighteenth Decisive Battle of the World* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1931).

well illustrated by the above events. In February of 1920 the Supreme Council urged the Poles not to advance. They did so, and were successful. The British Government took no notice of their disobedience. In June 1920 the Poles ceased to be successful and retreated. It was then that the British Government expressed moral indignation regarding their action in the previous February, ordered them to retreat 125 miles to the Curzon line, and promised them full support if that line were crossed by their enemies. It *was* crossed. The British Government confined their support to the despatch of a mission of enquiry. The French, who until the crucial moment had kept aloof from all menaces and all promises, sent General Weygand. The latter, within a few weeks, converted defeat into victory. Our credit in Central Europe was seriously damaged by these events. The credit of France was justifiably enhanced. We had promised full assistance in certain eventualities and had, when those eventualities occurred, refused to furnish it. France, by a single dramatic gesture and in the person of a little soldier of genius, had saved Poland and given her twice as much as the British had ever offered.

It is difficult, even with the documents before us, even with full recollection of Curzon's dilemma at the time, to be certain how far the Foreign Secretary was responsible for this humiliating episode. On the one hand Lord Curzon was not present at the crucial interview between Mr. Lloyd George and M. Grabski. On the other hand he consented to give his name to the telegrams and Notes which resulted from that interview. The success of General Weygand, again, was due (as that modest man has himself frequently ad-

mitted) to an element of chance. M. Millerand cannot claim any miraculous prevision. The success of French policy is no real criterion of our own failure. That failure is to be judged rather by the standards of traditional diplomacy. Those traditions enjoin that Great Britain should neither threaten nor promise in circumstances in which her threats or her promises cannot, with complete certainty, be fulfilled. In the Polish crisis of 1920 there was no such certainty. Great Britain therefore should have indulged in neither threats nor promises. She indulged in both. And *both were falsified.*

The discomfiture of the British Government was extreme. It was in the mood of mortification thus engendered that they thereafter dealt with other symptoms of Anglo-French disagreement. The two major conflicts which then arose were concerned with Reparation, and its ensuing ' sanctions ', and the Near Eastern question. They will be examined respectively in Chapters VIII and IX. It will be convenient in the present chapter to refer to other, and more subsidiary, causes of estrangement.

6

There was first the question of Soviet Russia. The French from the outset had regarded the Bolshevik system as a crime against humanity and had obstructed all Mr. Lloyd George's efforts to draw Lenin into the comity of nations. They had been delighted by the failure of the Prinkipo proposal in 1919 and had looked with grave disfavour at the decision of the Supreme Council in January of 1920 to open commercial relations with the Russian cooperatives. At San Remo

again, it was only with the most grudging assent of France that the Supreme Economic Council had been authorised to 'make such arrangements with the Russian Trade Delegation as are necessary to enable trade with Russia to be resumed as rapidly as possible'. Mr. Lloyd George went further. He invited M. Krassin, the head of the Russian cooperatives, to come with a delegation to London. M. Krassin with M. Kameneff arrived in May of 1920 promising to confine themselves to commercial questions and to interfere in no manner with British opinion or internal affairs. The Conservative supporters of the Coalition Government were disturbed by the presence of these gentlemen, nor were they in the least conciliated by Mr. Lloyd George's assurance that their mission had no political complexion whatsoever. Lord Curzon found himself, once again, in an awkward position. If he supported the protests of the Tory Party, might not Mr. Lloyd George seek for a Foreign Secretary elsewhere? The name of Sir Robert Horne had frequently been mentioned. If, on the other hand, he condoned by his own continuance at the Foreign Office these overtures towards what he himself had called 'this deplorable government at Moscow', might he not lose the confidence of his own Conservative supporters and the office of Prime Minister when the supreme occasion arrived? Curzon decided that in such a difficulty it was better to leave the whole responsibility to 'the little man'. The negotiations (which were interrupted by the Polish incident) were conducted between M. Krassin and Mr. Lloyd George's representative, Sir Robert Horne. On March 16, 1921, a 'Trade Agreement', which in the preamble was

described as but a preliminary to a formal treaty of peace between Great Britain and Russia, was signed in London. On the same day, at Moscow, was signed the Russo-Turkish treaty of amity. Curzon gnashed his teeth in rage. And the French regarded the whole business as but another instance of the disloyalty and inconsequence of British foreign policy.

This impression that the British Government were not wholly to be relied on for the integral execution of the treaties was increased by constant friction between French and British members of the several plebiscite commissions, of the Rhineland Commission, and of the commissions of control. The personal relations between these officials were in general amicable enough: it was the reports which they addressed to their home Governments which were lacking in mutual cordiality. The British members were inclined to give the benefit of any doubt to our late enemies; the French members were determined that the powers of every commission should be strained to the uttermost in a sense opposed to Germany. Nowhere was this friction more acute than in the plebiscite area of Upper Silesia. The French complained that the British were encouraging the Germans: the British complained that the French were unfairly favouring the Poles. These complaints were an unceasing source of irritation and controversy, and throughout 1920 and 1921 the thorn of Silesia injected poison into the relations between the Foreign Office and the Quai d'Orsay. At one moment, in July 1921, the conflict became so acute that M. de St. Aulaire spoke to Lord Curzon of 'a rupture of the alliance'. It has been suggested even that Lloyd George, at the time of the occupation of Duisberg, promised

the Germans our definite support in the Silesian question. Be that as it may, we certainly allowed the Germans to believe that we should insist upon a fair solution of the Silesian problem, and when, with British approval, a demonstrably unfair solution was imposed by the League of Nations the German Government became convinced that no reliance whatsoever could be placed in British promises of support.

There are many perfectly serious and informed Germans who contend to this day that it would have been better in the end for Germany had Great Britain honestly, openly and consistently maintained her alliance with France. By our vague emotionalism we encouraged certain elements in Germany to resist French aggression. When it came to the point we always abandoned Germany and supported France. True it was that in 1923 Lord Curzon rescued Germany from disintegration. Yet 1923 was two full years too late. In any case it is not to be denied that our handling of the Silesian question was so intermittent, so equivocal and so timid that we ended by bringing upon our heads the angered contempt of both parties to the controversy.[1]

[1] The main outlines of the Upper Silesian question can be summarised as follows. By Article 88 of the Treaty of Versailles and its Annex the inhabitants of Upper Silesia, within defined limits, were to decide by plebiscite whether they wished to be included within Germany or Poland. This plebiscite was to be conducted under the supervision of an inter-allied Commission accompanied by inter-allied forces of occupation. The Commission was under the presidency of General Lerond of the French army. The plebiscite was held on March 20, 1921, and disclosed 707,605 votes for Germany and 479,359 for Poland. The British argued from these figures that the whole area should go to Germany. The French refused to admit this contention. While the Allies squabbled, Korfanty with a body of Polish irregulars invaded the territory. He was resisted by a German force of 'Selbstschutz' under General Höffer. Neither the Allied Commission nor yet the Ambassador's Conference could reach an agreement as to the frontier to be drawn upon the basis of the plebiscite figures. The question was

Inevitably France became, not irritated only, but also anxious. Inevitably she sought to attain her dream of security by guarantees more dependable than those offered by ill-defined cooperation with so uncertain an ally. These alternative guarantees took two forms. On the one hand a tendency developed to cripple Germany economically and financially, to make demands of her under the heading of Reparation which were impossible of fulfilment, and to regard any default in the execution of these demands as justifying punitive measures, or 'sanctions', calculated to place even wider areas of German territory under French control. On the other hand an endeavour was made to encircle Germany and any possible allies whom she might obtain, with a ring of organised States united to each other by a network of treaties and military conventions and each dependent upon French financial backing, technical assistance and support.

It was in this manner that the system of the Little Entente was evolved. On February 19, 1921, a Franco-Polish Treaty was concluded by which both parties pledged themselves to 'consult each other in all questions of foreign policy . . . so far as those questions affect the settlement of international relations in the spirit of the Treaties' and, in the event of any unprovoked aggression upon the territory of either, 'to take concerted measures for the defence of their terri-

referred to the Supreme Council, who were also unable to reach an agreement and referred the whole problem, on August 12, 1921, to the League of Nations. The League referred the matter to a sub-committee on which sat representatives of China, Brazil, Spain and Belgium. The committee reported and the Council of the League thereupon (October 14, 1921) decided in favour of the partition of Upper Silesia between Germany and Poland. This was followed by an outburst of indignation in Germany and the resignation of the Wirth Cabinet. The decision was, in fact, unpardonably unfair, and wholly unworthy of the League of Nations.

tory and the protection of their legitimate interests'. A similar treaty was concluded on March 3, 1921, between Poland and Rumania, under Article 3 of which a military convention would 'determine the manner in which either country shall render assistance to the other'. A 'Convention of Alliance' had already been concluded between Jugoslavia and Czechoslovakia on August 14, 1920, and this was supplemented by a similar Convention signed between Rumania and Czechoslovakia on April 23, 1921. The Jugoslav-Rumanian Treaty was concluded on June 7, 1921, whereby the whole organism, with Poland as its umbilical cord, was linked and integrated under the Quai d'Orsay.

These treaties, which seemed to establish a French hegemony upon the continent, were in no sense welcome to the British Government. Lord Curzon regarded them almost as a personal affront. He was overwhelmed with work and worry during those years and his self-pity expressed itself at moments with querulous intensity. 'What a happy man I should be', he wrote in February 1921, 'if I could escape it all.' In September of the same year he poured out his exhaustion and anxiety in a long letter to Lady Curzon. 'It is breaking me', he wrote, and in those words one can hear the echo of his constantly petulant dismay. Nor was it Europe and Asia alone which during those months caused such acute displeasure to Lord Curzon. There was also Mr. Lloyd George. There can be little doubt that the Prime Minister would on occasions take pleasure in humiliating Lord Curzon in the presence of foreign statesmen.[1] He felt that thereby he was revenging himself upon a typical member of the terri-

[1] For a typical scene see Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, p. 174.

torial aristocracy for the real or imagined outrages which his uncle, Richard Lloyd, had suffered at Llynastumdwy at the hands of the landowning class. Lord Curzon would bow his head in mortification, determined, in the interests of his country and his own career, to bear any insult with Christian humility. An incident in April 1921 did in fact bring him to the verge of resignation. An interallied Conference assembled at Lympne to which Lord Curzon, although Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was not invited. Mr. Robert Vansittart was summoned in his place. This 'deliberate ignominy' could scarcely be disregarded. Curzon protested, threatened, and then, as always, withdrew his resignation.[1] 'Curzon', as Mr. Lloyd George remarked at a later date, 'was always sending me letters of resignation. He would send them by a messenger afflicted with a club-foot. A second and more nimble messenger would thereafter be despatched with a second letter.' It was from those early months of 1921 that Curzon first came to long, with passionate ardour, for the disappearance of Lloyd George.

[1] Responsibility for this unfortunate affront was, with characteristic generosity, assumed by Sir Maurice Hankey, who addressed to Lord Curzon a full and ample apology.

Chapter VIII

REPARATION

The Reparation problem as a specimen of post-war diplomacy—The Treaty of Versailles had provided a sensible machinery but with the withdrawal of America that machinery failed to function—The problem thus became a Franco-British problem and in view of the state of French and British opinion it was impossible to treat essential causes but only possible to treat resultant symptoms—The uncertainty and delay thereby created ruined the German middle classes and produced in Central Europe a focus of inflammation—Lloyd George and Curzon foresaw all this but had not the necessary public support to risk a surgical operation—They thus treated Reparation in stages—Examination of these stages—The Spa Conference—The Germans miss the first opportunity—The Brussels Conference of Experts—The Allies miss the second opportunity—The London Conferences—The Germans miss the third opportunity—After this failure Lloyd George evolves the formula of 'Reparation, Security, Reconstruction'—Reparation collapses with the fall of the mark—Security fails owing to the fall of Briand—Reconstruction, as attempted at the Genoa Conference, fails owing to the wrecking tactics of M. Poincaré—Curzon's delight at this last failure.

I

It would be beyond the scope of this study, as of the capacity of its author, to examine the Reparation problem from the financial or economic point of view.[1] The subject will be approached in the form of two subsidiary questions, namely: 'How far does the handling of the Reparation problem illustrate the methods of democratic diplomacy?' 'How far, and

[1] The main facts are admirably summarised in Sir Andrew McFadyean's *Reparation Reviewed*. Much light on the question is also thrown by Mr. Lloyd George's *Truth About Reparation and War Debts*, and by the three fascinating volumes of Lord D'Abernon's *Ambassador of Peace*. Count Kessler's *Rathenau* is also valuable as showing the German point of view.

in what manner, was it responsible for the ensuing breach between Great Britain and France?'

The Reparation problem furnishes a classic instance of modern diplomatic methods. It is generally recognised that on the technical side the proposals and procedure of the Allied statesmen were unscientific to a degree. The Supreme Council, not unaided by the Reparation Commission, fixed the German debt at a fantastic figure without considering how such vast sums could, without serious economic damage, be collected or transferred.[1] It is interesting to observe moreover that the purely diplomatic handling of the problem was equally inexpert, was equally subject to that hopefulness and imprecision which seem inseparable from any democratic negotiation. The statesmen of Europe began by raising popular expectation to a point where it became unreasoning; they were then afraid to disabuse that opinion of the fallacies which they themselves had fostered.

It is customary to-day to ascribe all the ills from which post-war Europe has suffered to the errors made by those who negotiated and signed the Treaty of Versailles. This, in that it contains but one-tenth of

[1] The following are a few among the many successive estimates of the total sums which might be expected from Germany:

(1) Hughes-Cunliffe Committee of 1918, total sum	£24,000,000,000
Payable in annual instalments of	£1,200,000,000
(2) American estimate of total in 1919	£13,000,000,000
(3) Boulogne Conference figure, June 1920	£13,450,000,000
(4) Paris Conference figure, January 1921	£11,300,000,000
(5) German offer, March 1921	£1,500,000,000
(6) Reparation Commission figure, April 1921	£6,600,000,000

(7) Dawes plan of April 1924 suggested no total figure but a scale of annuities rising from £50,000,000 in 1924 to £125,000,000 in 1929.

(8) Young Plan of June 1929 suggested sixty annual instalments of less than £100,000,000.

the truth, is a dangerous fallacy. It was not the Treaty so much as its aftermath which proved a disaster; it was not so much the operation itself which was bungled as the period of convalescence. In regard to Reparation, for instance, the actual Articles of the Treaty were not (largely owing to Mr. Lloyd George's influence) as unwise as is generally supposed.

In Great Britain the coupon election of 1918 had centred upon the slogan, 'Let Germany pay for the whole costs of the war'. Mr. Lloyd George, it is true, was careful to qualify his election pledges by two reservations. The first reservation was that Germany should be forced to pay the maximum 'of which she is capable'. The second reservation was that these payments should not be of a nature to harm British trade, production or employment. These vital qualifications, for which he was reproved at the time even by responsible newspapers, failed to diminish popular expectation. The British taxpayers, the House of Commons which they had elected, the Press by which they were encouraged, all demanded and proclaimed that the whole costs of the war should and could be defrayed from German pockets. In continental countries this monetary expectation was even more ignorant and vindictive.

In order to evade this conflict between immediate popular desires and ultimate national interests, Mr. Lloyd George evolved an ingenious plan. He decided—such was his disinclination to disappoint popular expectation—that no definite figure should for the moment be laid down as the total of the German debt. By Article 232 of the Treaty of Versailles Germany was forced to promise compensation 'for all damage done

to the civilian population of the Allied and Associated Powers and to their property'. The amount of this damage and the methods of payment were to be examined and established, before May 1, 1921, by an Inter-Allied Commission called the 'Reparation Commission'.[1]

It was Mr. Lloyd George's hope and intention that the Reparation Commission thus constituted and empowered would become an impartial, expert and independent body; that by the time they came to make their report (*i.e.* by May of 1921) a more reasonable frame of mind would have permeated the Allied democracies; and that the fantastic expectations of the Armistice period would by then have been succeeded by more sober desires. British opinion did in fact (and largely under the impulse of Mr. Keynes' *Economic Consequences of the Peace*) rapidly moderate its expectations. Continental opinion, and especially French opinion, remained gullible and intransigent until 1924.

Nor was this the only area in which Mr. Lloyd George's hopes miscarried. The refusal of the United States Senate to ratify the Treaty of Versailles deprived the Reparation Commission of its American member. This was a major disaster. The Commission was thereby reduced to four members, under the presidency of a French chairman who held a casting vote. The Belgians, who were nervous of being cheated of their claim to priority, on almost every occasion voted with

[1] It should be noted that the Reparation Commission were much hampered by their terms of reference. By Article 234 they were forbidden to cancel any part of the German debt without the specific authority of the interested Governments. By Article 13 (a) of Annex II decisions on all vital questions had to be unanimous. It may be questioned whether Mr. Lloyd George's ingenious plan would have worked in practice even if the United States had maintained their cooperation.

the French. The Italian vote was uncertain. Again and again did Sir John Bradbury,[1] the British delegate, find himself in a minority of one. Moreover, although our own representatives on the Commission had been chosen for their financial knowledge and expert independence, the other delegates (with the temporary but honourable exception of M. Theunis) were trained politicians rather than trained financiers, and were in no sense independent of the instructions of their Governments or the feelings of their electorates. Instead therefore of becoming, as had been intended, an impartial, judicial and independent body, the Reparation Commission became a body sensitive to French political pressure. The Reparation Chapter of the Treaty of Versailles, together with its Annexes, gave to the French ample opportunity to justify upon a juridical basis actions which had a political motive. The terms of reference under which the Commission functioned thus became, once the French had secured control, not a political safeguard, but a juridical menace. If that menace were to be averted, the only possible procedure was to take Reparation policy out of the hands of the Commission and to replace it in the hands of the Prime Ministers themselves. Mr. Lloyd George's endeavour to circumvent the evils of democratic diplomacy was thus, through no fault of his own, condemned to failure from the start. Reparation relapsed into the hands of the political amateur.

It may be contended that Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Curzon, had they been possessed of real vision

[1] John Bradbury, b. 1872; Joint Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, 1913-1919; Principal British Representative on the Reparation Commission, 1919-1925; created Lord Bradbury, 1925; a dry and alarming figure of great integrity.

and courage, would have realised from the very outset that the withdrawal of the United States of America would render the Reparation Commission, not a channel of scientific pacification, but an instrument of French vindictiveness. The answer to this criticism is that both Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Curzon were fully alive to this disturbing circumstance. Their conceptions, from the very start, were both uneasy and wise: the misfortune was that they hesitated to effectuate these conceptions in terms of any active, open, or immediate policy. It is quite correct to claim Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Curzon as the only true begetters of the Dawes plan and even of Locarno. It is also quite correct to condemn them for the long delay which intervened between love at first sight and the consummation of a marriage between good sense and justice.

2

It was that delay which proved so fatal. It would be possible to assert, and to prove by documents, that Lloyd George and Curzon were from the beginning aware of the danger and stupidity of excessive reparation and that from the beginning they endeavoured to effect a more reasonable settlement in which the United States should, morally at least, cooperate. Yet the delay in giving effect to this realisation was more disastrous than any Treaty of Versailles. It produced in Germany despair, bankruptcy, inflation and the complete ruin of that middle class which can alone give spiritual stability in an industrial age. For that delay, for that terrible hesitancy, democratic opinion in France, and to a less extent in Great Britain, is in the main responsible.

A diplomacy which is based upon the immediate (as distinct from the ultimate) concurrence of a parliament and the national newspapers must always be a bad diplomacy. The Reparation question is a proof of this contention. Mr. Lloyd George, Lord Curzon and the experts understood the situation: the House of Commons did not. Yet because of public ignorance the British Government were unable to adopt a firm or intelligent policy until it was too late.

The difficulties, it must be emphasised, were tremendous. At what precise moment in 1919, in 1920, in 1921, or even in 1922 could any British Government have repudiated their treaty obligation and openly joined Germany as against France? That was the central conundrum. The Reparation question, even as it was, became a highly controversial matter. It led to twelve international conferences and the fall of thirty-nine different Cabinets in central and western Europe. Nor was it possible at any given moment to dissociate detailed disagreement from disagreement in principle. At what moment could it have been stated definitely that France had substituted for her desire to obtain an indemnity, a desire to use the Reparation problem and Commission as a means of ruining Germany financially and economically and of obtaining, in the form of sanctions, those territorial guarantees which had been denied her by the Paris Conference? That moment only occurred in 1923. To this day it is uncertain whether even M. Poincaré really wished to sacrifice reparation to security. How would it have been possible for any British Cabinet in 1920 or 1921 to state openly that in order to prevent France establishing a physical hegemony in Europe it would be

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necessary to deprive the British taxpayer of those German payments which had been counted as impending assets in our budget? It must be remembered that in those years the epithet 'pro-German' was still a term of disparagement. It must be remembered that the French Government were throughout in the position to appeal to the principle of the 'sanctity of treaties'. It would have been difficult to convince French, or even British, opinion that the Reparation Chapter of the Treaty of Versailles had been wholly falsified by the abstention of the United States. Inevitably Mr. Lloyd George temporised; manœuvred; waited.

It was not, once again, the policy of Mr. Lloyd George which was at fault so much as his methods. In his desire to conciliate British public opinion he placed himself in a false moral position by including war pensions under the heading of 'damage done to the civilian population', and by being extremely subtle regarding the German mercantile fleet and the Reparation Recovery Act. In his desire to conciliate French public opinion he never openly forced an issue but extracted, at conference after conference, petty concessions from France such as might serve his ends. Sir Andrew McFadyean has well diagnosed these errors of method:

> 'While as between Governments it is perhaps difficult to apportion the iniquity, a large part of the blame for the errors of the earlier stages must certainly be ascribed to Mr. Lloyd George. He at least knew the evil to be treated required a major operation, doubtful though it may be how far he realised the extent of the amputations necessary. He preferred in his periodical consultations

with French Prime Ministers, and particularly with M. Briand, to consent to successive minor operations which did nothing but temporarily check the malady at the expense of the enfeeblement of the organism. The French were led to make a series of concessions, each of which was of little value when radical remedies were required, and the cumulative effect of which was negligible: on each occasion the French people with an illogicality from which even so logical a race is not immune, were genuinely persuaded that they were making the only sacrifice, an impression which was often seriously heightened by the complaints of interested individuals or hidebound Tariff Reformers (it cannot be only Free Traders who deserve this constant epithet) in England that the payment of reparation meant the ruin of British trade. The net result was a profound distrust of British policy and a state of genuine and not unnatural bewilderment in the French mind.'[1]

This bewilderment, it must be confessed, was increased by the actual manner and method of Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Curzon. It seems strange to those who have watched, experienced, or studied the diplomacy of Mr. Lloyd George to hear the criticism expressed that the greatest of our War Ministers was, in times of peace, lacking in diplomatic continuity. No statesman has in fact been so obstinately persistent, so blindly pertinacious. The volatility of Mr. Lloyd George's methods has concealed from the eyes of many a critic the rock-like immobility of his aims. Lord Curzon was different. He possessed, in European matters, little stability of objective; it was his methods which were almost ostentatiously stable. Mr. Lloyd George, relying upon instinct only, would dart towards

[1] *Reparation Reviewed*, by Sir Andrew McFadyean, pp. 35, 36.

his objectives (and they were often correct objectives) by a series of zigzag flutterings which were most disconcerting to the observer. He thereby conveyed an impression of empiricism and insincerity. It was an incorrect impression. Lord Curzon, on the other hand, would stride majestically in the wake of Mr. Lloyd George's improvisations, and thereafter (when suddenly abandoned by his leader) would stride back again with equal majesty. They were not, in the end, a successful combination. Lord Curzon would convey to foreign observers the impression that he had a definite purpose. He had no such purpose. Mr. Lloyd George would convey the impression that he had no conception of his ultimate destination, but was sporting as a kingfisher above the stream. Here again a false interpretation intervened. The resultant conviction formed by foreign statesmen was that each, for different reasons, was independable. The essence of efficient diplomacy is dependability: in failing to supply that essence Lloyd George and Curzon were severely hampered in their conduct of foreign affairs.

3

The Reparation problem divides itself into three more or less distinct phases. The first phase opened on January 10, 1920, with the coming into force of the Treaty of Versailles and ended on May 11, 1921, with the acceptance by Germany of the first schedule of payments. The second phase extended from May 12, 1921, to the occupation of the Ruhr on January 11, 1923. The third phase began on January 12, 1923, and ended on October 31, 1924, with the coming into force of the Dawes plan. During the first phase the

French and British Governments were, outwardly at least, united in a desire to extract from Germany as much money as was possible. During the second phase it became apparent that M. Poincaré wished, under the cover of Reparation, to obtain what he imagined would be security. During the third phase Great Britain (with the aid of world-opinion and the fall of the franc) was able—although two years too late—to induce the French Government to adopt a less excessive attitude. During the first two phases Curzon played a secondary and somewhat inglorious rôle. During the third phase his influence was dominant, and, in the end, salutary. The last phase, which was political rather than financial, will be dealt with in detail in Chapter XII. In the present chapter the history of the Reparation question from January 10, 1920, to January 11, 1923, will be outlined in summary form.

It is interesting to note, on looking back to the early stages of the problem, how all the subsequent errors and conflicts were implicit from the start. Mr. Lloyd George, realising that the Reparation Commission had, owing to the withdrawal of America, become an awkward instead of a convenient instrument, endeavoured at San Remo to achieve the fixation of a lump sum by means of direct negotiation with the German Government. The French, being opposed to any direct negotiation, wished to stand on the letter of the Treaty of Versailles and to exploit the cat-and-mouse powers which, under that Treaty, devolved upon the Reparation Commission. The usual unhappy compromise was reached on the lines that the Germans would be invited to a conference, and would be asked

to submit an ' honest proposal '. Should they fail to make such a proposal, then the Allies would impose one of their own.

This issue between negotiation and imposition was joined at the Spa Conference (July 5-16, 1920). Some evil destiny decreed that almost every protagonist at that Conference should behave with the maximum stupidity. The Allies began by quarrelling among themselves over the disposal of the German spoils. The Germans, when they eventually appeared, behaved with unexampled ineptitude. Instead of assisting Mr. Lloyd George in his policy of conciliation, they played straight into the hands of the French by convincing even their sympathisers that imposition was the only form of diplomacy which they thoroughly understood.

There are many excuses which can be urged in extenuation of the German failure to take advantage of the opportunity offered to them by the Conference at Spa. They were still suffering from shell-shock and it was irksome to them to make their first appearance as members of the Concert of Europe in a building (the Villa La Fraineuse) which had witnessed the more triumphant of their war councils in 1917, and in a local atmosphere of embittered hostility. In the very best of circumstances, the German sense of inferiority is prone to take offence. They call it ' honour '. They were thus wounded by the quite innocent omission of the British Delegation to return their visiting cards, and even more disturbed by the hooting of the Belgian populace in the streets. Yet these were not the only occurrences which ruffled their placidity.

Their Delegation, in the first place, was imprudently composed. The Germans have never displayed any

marked aptitude for team work, yet it seems incredible that Chancellor Fehrenbach[1] should have decided to bring to Spa a team sundered by such internecine animosities. Conscious as he was of being at the head of a weak coalition, he had brought with him his intellectual left in the person of Rathenau,[2] and his physical right in the person of Hugo Stinnes.[3] This error on his part did not contribute to unity among the German delegates themselves.

In the second place the German Delegation were hampered by the order in which subjects had been placed on the agenda. The Conference began with disarmament. The French, having been primed by General Nollet, their representative on the Commission of Control in Germany, addressed to Chancellor Fehrenbach certain very pertinent and detailed questions. The latter was naturally unable to answer these questions. He summoned his experts, Dr. Gessler, the Minister of War, and General von Seeckt,[4] the Commander-in-Chief of the Republican Reichswehr. The latter appeared in uniform. That was an error of taste. He wore the Iron Cross. That was provocative. He gave (being a man of extreme honesty and courage) the correct figures. That was an insult. He confessed that Germany still possessed twice the number of

[1] Constantin Fehrenbach: Catholic Centre; born in Baden, January 1852; President of the Weimar Assembly, 1919; Chancellor, 1920-1921. Died March 1926.

[2] Walther Rathenau: Jew; intellectual; rich industrialist; originator of the Policy of Fulfilment.

[3] Hugo Stinnes: born 1870; Director of the Essen Coal Syndicate; press magnate. Died April 1924, after which his trusts collapsed.

[4] General von Seeckt, born April 4, 1866; Chief of Staff to Mackensen; after Kapp putsch made Commander-in-Chief of Reichswehr; dismissed by Gessler in 1926; wrote *Gedanken eines Soldaten*; an intelligent and high-minded man.

troops allowed her by the Treaty of Versailles and that her present armaments were five to six times larger than those prescribed by the military clauses. The Germans, so the French argued, had with characteristic brutality admitted that they had not yet been able to execute the military clauses.

The Conference then proceeded to discuss coal deliveries under the heading of reparation in kind. As a coal expert, Herr Hugo Stinnes was, most regrettably, invited to speak. He stood up defiantly and stared at his audience. He had the appearance of Ahasuerus dressed as a gamekeeper. He began as follows: 'I rise because I want to look everybody in the face. M. Millerand announced yesterday that we Germans were accorded the right to speak as a matter of courtesy. I claim to speak as a matter of right. Whoever is not afflicted with the disease of victory . . .' At this moment Hugo Stinnes was called to order by the President. Lord Curzon, in later years, would often imitate the exact mixture of acute embarrassment, indignation and unction with which M. Delacroix, at that instant, intervened. Yet Hugo Stinnes, thrusting his heavy hands into the enormous pockets of his trousers, continued. He referred to the possibility of sanctions, to the possibility of an Allied occupation of the Ruhr. He began to shout. 'If', he shouted, 'black troops—those worthy instruments of Allied policy—are used for this purpose, the feelings of every white man will recoil, nor'—and here he ceased shouting and started to yell—'will the Allies get any coal'.

Dr. Simons,[1] the German Foreign Secretary, en-

[1] Dr. Walther Simons, b. 1861; Foreign Secretary, June 1920-May 1921.

deavoured in vain to mitigate the effect of this outburst. Stinnes, he explained, was almost always like that: it was exactly in that tone of voice that he was wont to address his own board meetings. Yet the damage had been done. It was no longer possible for Mr. Lloyd George (since Millerand in response to this outburst had cooed gently as a dove) to contend that the Germans were amenable to negotiation.

We now know that Herr Stinnes' outburst produced within the German Delegation a conflict even more acute than that which it produced among the Allies. Simons, Wirth [1] and Rathenau were all in favour of the 'Policy of Fulfilment'. Stinnes, who was at the time backed by all the sections of the right, was in favour of opposition and blackmail. His idea was to threaten the Allies with a Bolshevik Germany and to proceed with that threat to the utmost Communist extreme. A compromise, largely owing to the wise counsel of General von Seeckt, was eventually arrived at. The German Delegation agreed among themselves that they should offer to provide a quantity of coal approximating to the Allied demands, provided that they were assured of Upper Silesia. It was also, and most unfortunately, agreed that pending a decision on Upper Silesia and the coal question, Germany could advance no 'honest proposal' in respect of Reparation. The Allied Powers countered this recalcitrance by an elaborate ultimatum. The Conference was suspended for two days. Marshal Foch and General Wilson appeared suddenly at Spa. General Degoutte, Com-

[1] Dr. Wirth (born 1879) was at the time Minister of Finance. He became Chancellor in 1921 and to him fell the task of accepting the Allied ultimatum of May 1921. An honest, devout South German, consistently loyal to Rathenau's 'Policy of Fulfilment'.

mander-in-Chief of the Rhineland Army, was also summoned. The Germans capitulated. On July 16 they signed the desired coal convention. In the excitement which had thus, wholly artificially, been produced they omitted to advance any proposal regarding their total liability under Reparation. Mr. Lloyd George's effort to induce the Germans to behave rationally had therefore failed: inevitably, and for a further space of time, he was obliged to follow the French in their insistence upon employing the machinery of imposition provided by the Treaty of Versailles. And at Spa, without question, it was the Germans, and not Mr. Lloyd George, who were to blame.

4

A further opportunity for settling the Reparation problem on a basis of reason was offered by the Conference of Experts which was held at Brussels from December 16 to December 22, 1920. On this occasion, the German Delegation was composed of technicians headed by the admirable Dr. Carl Bergmann. The matter was thus approached from the scientific point of view, and as a result the Allied experts were able to produce for the consideration of their Prime Ministers a scheme which, although excessive, was not beyond the limits of common sense. In their report, which was presented in January 1921, they confessed that it was impossible, in the present confused state of German finances, to fix any sum as representing the total amount which would be within the ultimate capacity of Germany to pay. They admitted also that until Germany could be informed of her total liability, it would be difficult for her to place her finances upon a

sound basis. As a way out of this vicious circle they suggested that the fixation of the capital debt should be postponed, but only for a period of five years. And that during those five years Germany should pay an annuity of £150,000,000.

This scheme (which if adopted at the time might well have saved Germany from bankruptcy and the world from the economic and political insecurity which ensued) was not seriously considered by the Allied statesmen. The Supreme Council met in Paris on January 24, 1921, and M. Doumer, the French Minister of Finance, then informed them that the reparation claims of France alone could not be less than £5,500,000,000, and that the total of Germany's liability should be fixed at £10,000,000,000. To meet this debt Germany would have to pay an annuity of £600,000,000 for a period of forty-two years. 'Of course', he said, 'there is the possible risk of bankruptcy in Germany and it may be said that Germany may be led to ruin, but if any bankruptcy is to take place, I do not think it is fair that it should be France that should incur such bankruptcy in order that Germany should escape paying this twelve milliard per annum for the war'. Mr. Lloyd George remarked at this stage that the total of Germany's export trade before the war was no higher than eleven milliard of gold marks, that such vast sums could not be transferred in gold and could only be transferred in goods and services, and that M. Doumer's proposal, if persisted in, would lead to grave financial and economic disturbance. M. Briand did not support the fantastic figures of his own Minister of Finance. Yet the disproportion between the claims of M. Doumer and the

proposals of the Brussels experts was so enormous that the Supreme Council decided to ignore the latter and to produce a scheme of their own under which a scale of annuities rising from two to six milliards of gold marks would be imposed on Germany for a period of forty-two years. This unfortunate scheme was communicated to the German Government in a Note of January 28, 1921. They replied that they could not undertake to fulfill these demands which went beyond Germany's capacity to pay.

It should be observed at this stage that in presenting to Germany their scheme of January 28, 1921, the Supreme Council committed a blunder in diplomatic technique. In the Note of June 16, 1919, in which they had replied to the German counter-proposals on the Treaty of Versailles, the Allied Governments had expressly offered Germany the chance of putting up a 'lump sum' proposal of her own. In the event of such a proposal proving unacceptable, the Allies would bring to bear the procedure laid down in the Treaty itself, namely the whole machinery of the Reparation Commission. By January 1921 that Commission, for reasons which have been already explained, had been pushed into the background. Yet the fact remains that the Allies were not entitled under the Treaty to sidetrack the Reparation Commission or to impose the solution of January 28, 1921, on their own. Had the German Government been more acute, they would have seized upon this chink in the Allied armour. They were not acute. Dr. Simons would have been within his legal rights had he ignored the proposal of January 28, 1921, and had he insisted upon the application of the procedure laid down in the Treaty which Germany

had signed. He may have felt that the Reparation Commission was not in any case an independent body and that to raise minor juridical points at the moment would only serve still further to irritate the Allies. Yet had he insisted upon the juridical position from the start, it would have become even more difficult than it was for the Allies to justify the imposition of sanctions.

Be that as it may, Dr. Simons did not question the legal authority of the Note of January 28, 1921, and it was on the basis of that Note that he produced a counter-proposal to the London Conference on March 1, 1921.[1] The icy disapproval with which this proposal was received by the assembled politicians increased the chill which, in spite of blazing coal fires, hung about the high saloons of St. James's Palace. The French, whose indignation had been roused by Dr. Simons' recent public repudiation of the war-guilt thesis, as well as by disturbing reports on German disarmament which they had received from General Nollet, were intent upon exacting immediate sanctions. They suggested an occupation of the Ruhr. Lloyd George was at one with Lord Curzon in opposing these sanctions. 'The French', he remarked to Lord D'Abernon on March 1, 'can never make up their mind whether they want payment or whether they want the

[1] Dr. Simons' scheme of March 1, 1921, can be summarised as follows:
(1) 'Present value' of annuities demanded in Note of January 28 (discounted at 8 per cent.) is calculated at 50 milliard gold marks.
(2) Deduct from this deliveries in kind valued at 20 milliard gold marks. This makes 30 milliard gold marks as total liability.
(3) This liability to be partially met (*a*) by issue of loan of 8 milliard gold marks, (*b*) five annuities of 1 milliard gold marks.
(4) This offer conditional upon Upper Silesia remaining German, relief from further deliveries in kind, release of German private property in Allied countries.

enjoyment of trampling on Germany, occupying the Ruhr, or taking some other military action. It is quite clear that they cannot have both, and they have to make up their minds which they desire.' [1] As always, we surrendered to the French on the principle while obtaining in return some concession in practice. Fearful of an open breach with our ally, we consented, against our judgment, to a further occupation of German territory, while restricting that occupation to the Rhine ports of Duisburg, Düsseldorf and Ruhrort. Mr. Lloyd George delivered this ultimatum to Dr. Simons on March 3. The latter on March 7 produced a further counter-proposal in which, while slightly increasing the annuities, he refused to make a definite offer beyond the first five-year period, and insisted upon maintaining his reservation about Upper Silesia. This offer was also rejected; the sanctions were carried out on March 8, 1921. A few days later these sanctions, which were illegal at the time they were executed, were brought within the aegis of the Treaty by a startlingly convenient notification on the part of the Reparation Commission that Germany was technically in default over deliveries under Article 235.

On April 27, 1921, the Reparation Commission at last emerged from their retirement and presented a report fixing Germany's total liability at £6,600,000,000. On April 30 took place the second Conference of London to consider this report. It was agreed that a schedule of payments should be elaborated by the Reparation Commission and that this schedule should be presented to Germany with a further ultimatum threatening the occupation of the Ruhr in the event of

[1] D'Abernon, *Ambassador of Peace*, vol. i, pp. 127, 128.

non-compliance. The scheme was drafted on May 2[1] and on the same day M. Briand decreed the mobilisation of class 19 of the French army. The ultimatum was despatched on May 5 and reached Berlin upon the following day. The Germans were allowed a respite of six days in which to answer. The Cabinet resigned, and a new Ministry was formed by Dr. Wirth. On May 11 the latter replied accepting the London schedule of payments. Thus ended the first phase of the Reparation conflict.

5

Curzon, during this first phase of Reparation, had played a silent and subordinate rôle. He was not interested in economics, and his interest in finance was confined to his own income. It was fitting, moreover, that Mr. Lloyd George, who was so vivid on the subject of gold marks and milliards, should have the field to himself. Curzon would sit there beside him, at moments leaning forward stiffly in his chair and writing rapidly in pencil in an enormous script upon large sheets of blue foolscap; at other moments manœuvring stiffly backwards, the twitch of pain upon his features subsiding behind that consular mask, his eyes fixed in a basilisk stare upon Hugo Stinnes, or the precise Dr. Simons, or the unfortunate interpreter

[1] The London schedule of payments can be summarised as follows: Germany was to deliver three series of bonds with interest at 5 per cent. and sinking fund at 1 per cent. Series A was to be for £600,000,000 and to be delivered by July 1, 1921. Series B was for £1,900,000,000 and to be delivered by November 1, 1921. Series C was for £4,000,000,000 to be delivered by November 1, 1921, but not to be issued until the Reparation Commission were satisfied that funds were available for interest and sinking fund. As security Germany was to assign her customs, a levy of 25 per cent. on exports, and certain taxes to be determined later by a 'Committee of Guarantees'.

bungling with his notes. At Spa, Lord Curzon had been cruelly ravished by mosquitoes and his courtesy had suffered from a lack of sleep. During the London Conference he was more himself. On one occasion he appeared at Lancaster House resplendent in Windsor uniform, the ribbon of the Garter across his ample chest, the Star of India upon his breast, clasping his viceregal sword which was fashioned in the shape of a shooting-stick. 'Good gracious!' exclaimed Mr. Lloyd George as Curzon, in stiff suffering, lowered himself into the seat beside him. 'I have', answered Curzon, 'been attending a levée in my capacity as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs'. Mr. Lloyd George blinked, embarrassed by this apt reminder. There were moments when those who were around Curzon, and were fond of him, reflected sadly that it was in such functions only that he was allowed to exercise this capacity.

This sad reflection was not wholly justified. During the two London Conferences, Lord Curzon did useful work behind the scenes. It was among the Italian pictures and red damask of Curzon's study in Carlton House Terrace that many valuable conversations took place between Loucheur,[1] D'Abernon and himself. It was in that study that the first seeds of a reasonable solution were sown.

The initial credit for what proved the ultimate solution belongs, in all probability, to Lord D'Abernon—one of the most acute and broad-minded dip-

[1] Louis Loucheur, b. 1872; a French industrial; amiable, exuberant, chatty and sensible; in 1921 appointed Minister of the Liberated Regions; in 1925 Minister of Finance under Briand; resigns owing to his inability to cope with the idiocy of the French Chamber; one of the most reasonable and intelligent of French post-war experts; not a politician.

lomatists which this country has ever possessed. In his diary there is a significant entry under the date of April 29, 1921 : it runs as follows : 'Arrived London at 5.0 p.m. and saw George Curzon. . . . He is strongly against the occupation of the Ruhr, but seems to doubt how far it may be possible to control the menace. He did not take up my suggestion, that it was indispensable to bring in America, with any particular enthusiasm. England and America working together can restrain France and can bring Germany up to the scratch; alone, I doubt England being able to do either.'[1]

How came it, therefore, that with such correct intuitions, that with such enlightened advisers, Lloyd George and Curzon failed during those early months to extricate Europe from its vicious circle? Three major reasons may be suggested. The first, that Mr. Lloyd George, who was always temperamentally hostile to expert or even to educated opinion, was convinced that no economic recovery would be possible unless the total figure of Germany's liability were stated from the outset. Any agreement on such a figure was in fact impossible. The only hope was to agree to annuities running over five years, after which the whole problem might be reconsidered. Lloyd George's obsessive desire to arrive at a final figure was the main reason why the Brussels recommendations were shelved and why the French and Germans were never able to reach, under his or Curzon's mediation, a reasonable agreement. The second reason was that Dr. Simons had been misled, by people who imagined that they understood British mentality, into believing

[1] D'Abernon, *Ambassador of Peace*, vol. i, p. 156.

that in no circumstances would Great Britain agree to the imposition of sanctions. He thus hesitated to bring forward those concessions which he might well have made. A third reason was that opinion in the French Chamber and Senate did not permit either M. Briand or M. Loucheur to offer such a compromise as the Germans could accept. Such disabilities, such misconceptions, are inseparable from any negotiation. This tripartite misunderstanding was unfortunate, but it was inevitable. So long as each party refused to abandon detail for principle a deadlock was bound to result. Yet the fact remains that the three Prime Ministers could readily have concluded an agreement had it not been for the wishes of their own democracies.

The unfortunate conclusion of the first phase of the Reparation problem had, however, disclosed the essential weakness of British policy to ourselves, to Germany, to France and to the world at large. The effects of this disclosure were soon apparent. Lord Curzon and Lloyd George came to realise that Reparation could not be settled in its own terms and as a triangular conflict between France, Germany and Great Britain. From May 1921 onwards they endeavoured to widen the area of the problem and to include such auxiliary elements as interallied debts, French security, and world opinion. The Germans, in the person of Rathenau, formed the conviction as early as the Spa Conference that British sympathy was wholly platonic and that the last word would always rest with France. It was thus to M. Loucheur and not to Lord Curzon that Rathenau turned. On October 6, 1921, he negotiated with that able industrialist the 'Wiesbaden

Agreement' under which reparation would to a large extent be paid to France by the reconstruction of the devastated areas by German labour, material and equipment. This agreement was vetoed by French vested interests. It had, however, the result of convincing the Chamber that the maximum of reparation could not be obtained without damage to their own domestic economy. From that moment they came to regard Reparation as a devious method of obtaining security rather than as a direct method of obtaining money. The effect upon the world of the failure of Germany's creditors to reach a reasonable settlement was manifested by a fall in the German exchange. The mark, which in January 1921 had stood at 224 to the £, had fallen by November of that year to 1,020 to the £. It was evident that all the schedules, all the ultimatums of the past two years, were also depreciated paper. The word 'moratorium' was heard on every side.

Meanwhile the British Government at last realised that the central problem was not, in fact, reparation, but French security. They were assisted in this realisation by the fact that in December 1921 the French themselves initiated discussions. The Washington Conference on Armaments which had opened on November 12, 1921, had brought home to the French that their German policy was strongly disapproved of in the United States. M. Briand became alarmed by this sense of oceanic and marine isolation. He instructed M. de Saint Aulaire to sound Lord Curzon as to whether some Anglo-French pact of security could not now be devised. The Ambassador pointed out that the former guarantee treaties signed, and subsequently

repudiated, by the United States and Great Britain would not, even had they been in force, fully meet the anxieties of French public opinion. In that they provided only for the case of a direct German aggression against French territory they did not cover the possible eventuality of a German attack upon Poland which would involve France in war. Would not a wider, more comprehensive and bilateral treaty of alliance be both more precise and more comforting? Lord Curzon, with his accustomed delight in a hard bargain, was not forthcoming. He pointed out that British opinion had 'been a good deal moved by recent symptoms of French policy'. He suggested that the House of Commons might be averse to authorising 'commitments, so definite from one point of view, so indefinite from the other'. He hinted that in any event it might be advantageous to follow the precedent of 1904 and to preface any such agreement by the previous settlement of all outstanding Franco-British disputes. M. de Saint Aulaire returned to Albert Gate House discouraged.

A fortnight later the matter was broached directly by M. Briand to Mr. Lloyd George. The former explained that what he had in mind was a 'very broad alliance' to take the place of the guarantee of 1919. Mr. Lloyd George pointed out at once that, although British opinion might be ready to accept some commitment to assist France upon her own eastern frontier, it would be out of the question to conclude any form of alliance committing us to intervention on behalf of Poland or the Little Entente.

The subject was raised again at the Cannes Conference in January 1922. Mr. Lloyd George main-

tained his former point of view. M. Briand pressed for a military convention and for some article by which the two Governments should agree to 'consult together on any question likely to endanger the general peace'. These conversations were cut short by the fall of M. Briand and the accession to power of M. Raymond Poincaré. Mr. Lloyd George broke his return journey from Cannes and met M. Poincaré in Paris on January 14, 1922. The latter insisted upon a military convention supplementary to the Treaty of Guarantee. Mr. Lloyd George refused to commit himself to any such convention. The subsequent negotiations were conducted in London between Lord Curzon and M. de Saint Aulaire.

The instructions furnished by M. Poincaré to his Ambassador were of so exacting a nature that it may be questioned whether he ever seriously intended to reach a security agreement with Great Britain. It is impossible to resist the impression that M. Poincaré, from the day he succeeded to office, was determined to occupy the Ruhr and to obtain French security by force. Had he really desired an agreement with Great Britain he would not have instructed M. de Saint Aulaire to insist on conditions which he knew well that we should be unable to accept. The Ambassador in his interview with Curzon on January 23, 1922, explained that no treaty would be acceptable to France unless it were reciprocal, unless it embodied a precise military convention, unless it stipulated that any German violation of the Rhineland clauses of the Treaty of Versailles would constitute a *casus foederis*, unless it were concluded for a minimum duration of twenty years, and unless it gave to France the right to 'fore-

stall the danger of indirect German aggression'. Lord Curzon, on January 26, 1922, replied that he could not agree to a military convention, to a period longer than fifteen years, or to the violation of the Rhineland clauses being regarded as a *casus foederis*. Nor did he approve of Article IV of the French draft which provided that the two Governments 'should concert together on all questions of a nature to endanger the peace or to jeopardise the general order of things established under the Treaties of Peace'. The Ambassador suggested that this Article might be erased from the Treaty and embodied in a separate exchange of Notes. Lord Curzon answered that such a procedure would be inconsistent with principles as well as with the Covenant of the League of Nations. He then returned to his original suggestion that before any treaty were negotiated it would be fitting to reach a settlement upon all outstanding points of difference. M. de Saint Aulaire replied, not very accurately, that there was only one outstanding point of difference and that was Germany. The conversations were then suspended. They were followed by an exchange of extremely precise and gifted Notes between Lord Curzon and M. Poincaré. These led to brilliant dialectics on both sides but no result. The proposal for an Anglo-French alliance finally lapsed in July of 1922.

6

The failure of the London Conference of May 1921 to achieve any durable settlement of the Reparation problem convinced Mr. Lloyd George that there was no hope of moderating French policy unless the area of discussion were widely extended. He thus devised the

triple formula of 'Reparation, Security and Reconstruction'. Reparation, after November 1921, had perforce to be suspended owing to the collapse of the mark. A period intervened during which various forms of moratorium were suggested, while M. Poincaré kept nagging at Germany for his 'productive pledges'. In the previous section an attempt has been made to describe the Anglo-French negotiations on Security and to account for their failure. It remains to examine the third objective of Mr. Lloyd George's triple formula under the heading of Reconstruction.

At Cannes on January 6, 1922, Mr. Lloyd George had induced M. Briand to agree to the summoning of a World Conference at Genoa, with the object of remedying 'the paralysis of the European system'. The Soviet Government were to be invited to that Conference, and were to be offered recognition in return for a promise on their part not to indulge in subversive propaganda and to respect private foreign property within their borders. On January 11 M. Briand was hastily recalled to Paris. On January 12 he was forced to resign. M. Poincaré entered into office on January 13, 1922. From that moment the Conference at Genoa was doomed.

Being unable to abolish or postpone the Conference M. Poincaré concentrated his efforts on securing that it should reach no valuable conclusions. In this he amply succeeded. In his memorandum of February 5 he insisted that the Conference should not discuss any subject bearing upon the Peace Treaties which, so he contended, constituted 'the public law of Europe'; that if any non-aggression pact were concluded it should not apply to such measures of coercion as

France might wish to take against Germany; that the condition whereby Russia agreed, in return for recognition, to respect the private property of foreign residents should be enforced by 'international stipulations providing special elements of security', or in other words by some form of capitulatory régime; and that in no circumstance should the question of general disarmament be raised. On February 14 Lord Curzon replied to this memorandum in a Note which was the first, and perhaps the least acrimonious, of the many reasoned diatribes which he was to fling at M. Poincaré. The French Prime Minister replied by refusing to attend the Conference in person. His abstention was only slightly less serious than that of the United States. The Conference of Genoa was opened, with chilling solemnity and an underlying premonition of failure, on April 10, 1922. On April 16 Dr. Rathenau, in an impulse of conceited egoism, concluded with the Soviet a separate convention, known as the 'Treaty of Rapallo'. This treaty shared the fate of other treaties concluded with the Soviet in being highly sensational at the time and wholly unimportant a week after signature. At the moment, however, it exercised upon the Genoa Conference a most disruptive effect. On April 24 M. Poincaré delivered a speech at Bar-le-Duc in which he proclaimed that France, in the event of a German default, would act alone. Mr. Lloyd George contrived the obsequies of the Genoa Conference with consummate skill.

Lord Curzon himself had not accompanied the Prime Minister to Genoa. A fortunate, but by no means simulated, attack of phlebitis had confined him to his bed at Hackwood. With ill-concealed delight he

observed the failure of Mr. Lloyd George's grandiose scheme of a World Economic Conference. 'When I reflect', he wrote to Mr. Austen Chamberlain on May 13, 1922, 'that the P.M. is alone at Genoa with no F.O. to guide him, and with that arch-Bolshevik, Wise, running to and fro between the Soviets and himself, and when I recall the whole trend of his policy for the past three years—I can feel no certainty that we may not find ourselves committed to something pregnant with political disaster here'. 'I hope', he wrote again, 'that this will be the last of these fantastic gatherings which are really only designed as a stage on which he is to perform'. To the last moment he was afraid that Mr. Lloyd George, in order to save his face, would conclude some arrangement with the Soviet even more dramatic than the Treaty of Rapallo. 'To have dealings', he wrote, 'with such people is bad at all times. . . . But to do it in the conditions described and in order to scrape something out of Genoa would be the nadir of humiliation.' He was thus intensely relieved when the Conference dispersed. From his bed at Hackwood he rejoiced at 'this Genoa débâcle'. Even Mr. Lloyd George could hardly recover from such a defeat. The little man's tenure of the post of Prime Minister must now, at last, be drawing to its close. And who *was* there?—who could there possibly be?—among the Conservative leaders fitted, nay destined, to take his place?

Chapter IX

CHANAK

September 1922

Mustapha Kemal gains in strength and threatens the zone of the Straits—The Allies appeal to Venizelos, who within a few weeks restores the situation—The Supreme Council then draft the Treaty of Sèvres—Summary of its provisions—Sudden death of King Alexander of Greece and resultant general election—Venizelos defeated and Constantine recalled—Effect of this in Great Britain and France—Allies declare their neutrality in Græco-Turkish conflict—French interpret that neutrality as permitting them to make a separate Treaty with Kemal—Curzon's exchange of Notes with French Government on this Franklin-Bouillon Agreement—M. Gounaris, Constantine's Prime Minister, comes as a suppliant to London—Mr. Churchill's indictment of Curzon's policy—M. Gounaris' appeal of February 1922 *and Curzon's equivocal reply—The Montagu incident—The proposals of March* 1922*—The ensuing pause—The Greeks try to seize Constantinople—Mr. Lloyd George's indignation at Allied prohibition of this operation—The Greek collapse in Asia Minor—The Chanak decision and communiqué—Curzon's painful interview with Poincaré—The Greek revolution—Turks approach Chanak and Cabinet reply by an ultimatum—This ultimatum not delivered owing to good sense of General Harington and Sir Horace Rumbold—The Conversations at Mudania—Ismet's ultimatum—Curzon again crosses to Paris and induces Poincaré to accord support—Conclusion of Mudania Convention—The Conservative revolt—Curzon's equivocal attitude—Fall of Mr. Lloyd George.*

I

In Chapter IV the story of the Turkish nationalist revolt was traced from its origin to that moment when, on May 19, 1919, Mustapha Kemal Pasha landed at Samsun. From there he journeyed to Sivas and summoned to that inclement village those ex-officers or those former members of the Young Turk affiliations whom he hoped would be sympathetic to his plans.

In groups of two or three these disgruntled Ottomans drifted to Sivas. So soon as a sufficient number had been assembled they called themselves a 'Congress'. They also secured control of the telegraph and telephone installations of Asia Minor, a gambit which, if we are to believe M. Malaparte,[1] is the essence of any successful *coup d'état*. Thus armed, they demanded that the Sultan should dismiss Damad Ferid Pasha and issue orders for a fresh election. The British High Commissioner,[2] to whom the word 'election' appeared to be something unassailable, permitted the Sultan to consent. The supporters of Kemal obtained a large majority. The new parliament met on January 12, 1920. Kemal himself remained in Asia Minor.

During the early weeks of 1920 fortune favoured the nationalist cause. The British Government were demobilising: from every area in the Middle East they were rapidly withdrawing their troops: only a few unhappy Majors remained scattered throughout Anatolia, relying solely upon their red tabs, their excellent manners and their confidence in the clean-fighting Turk. Kemal quickly realised that these amiable officers could be ignored and even insulted. He was much encouraged by this realisation. He was even more encouraged by a sudden attack delivered, early in 1920, upon the Armenian levies with which France had hoped to garrison Cilicia. Marash was taken by assault and some 20,000 Armenian men, women and children were massacred. Turkey had found herself. At Constantinople, meanwhile, the Kemalist deputies

[1] G. Malaparte, *Technique du Coup d'Etat*, Grasset, 1931.

[2] Admiral de Robeck was High Commissioner till November 17, 1920, when he was succeeded by Sir Horace Rumbold.

to the new Chamber were manifesting a spirit of independence. An attempt by the Allied High Commissioners to depose the Minister of War was countered by the publication of the 'National Pact'. This famous document[1] may seem to the European reader to have been drafted with truculent muddle-headedness and to have ignored the central point. To the Turk, however, it echoed as a clarion call of national honour. The Sultan—not an unintelligent man—became alarmed. Orders were issued to the gendarmerie to arrest all nationalist agitators and an irregular force was created, on a religious appeal, under the name of the 'Army of the Caliph'. This army, in the early stages, had a certain emotional success. It appeared at one moment as if the nationalist movement would be suppressed by Turkey herself.

This hope was dashed by the action of the Allied High Commissioners at Constantinople. They decided that the time had come to make themselves felt. On March 16, 1920, they occupied Constantinople with powerful landing-parties, closed the parliament, and arrested the more conspicuous among the Kemalist deputies whom they deported to Malta. The remaining deputies crossed the Bosphorus and hurried to join

[1] The National Pact, in that it became the Koran of the whole nationalist movement, is a vital document. It was originally drafted at Erzeroum and first published by a group of dissident deputies to the Constantinople Parliament on January 28, 1920. It was officially adopted by the National Assembly at Angora in 1921.

It consisted of a preamble and six articles. The preamble stated that 'complete respect' for the articles was the only means of assuring 'the independence of the State and the future of the nation'. The articles provided for self-determination of the Arabs; of Batum, Kars and Ardahan; and of Western Thrace. Constantinople was to be 'protected from every danger', although the nationalists would apparently accept some régime securing the freedom of the Straits. Turkish minorities would be protected by treaties similar to those entered into by other European Powers. Turkey would, however, accept no financial or economic servitude.

Kemal in his Anatolian upland. A reaction, thereafter, set in against the 'Army of the Caliph'. Kemal, at Angora, felt less insecure. He arrested all the Allied control officers on whom he could lay hands and subjected them to brutal indignities. He went further. He drove an Italian detachment out of Konia and a British detachment out of Eski Shehir. He summoned a parliament of his own to Angora. And he began openly to defy, not the Greeks only, but also the Great Powers.

He was encouraged in this demeanour by a false move on the part of Venizelos. The latter, in order to hearten his exhausted country, had seen fit, on May 13, 1920, to disclose the main articles of the Treaty of Peace which the Allies, at that belated date, had at last agreed to impose upon Turkey. This revelation brought many thousand recruits to the Kemalist cause. Thus stimulated Mustapha Kemal decided to join issue with the Allied forces of occupation. In June 1920 he advanced upon the British troops who were at that time occupying the Ismid area of the zone of the Straits. Some desultory shots were exchanged. The Sultan, the High Commissioners, and even the Supreme Council became alarmed. The latter, as always in moments of acute perturbation, sent for M. Venizelos.

2

The Prime Minister of Greece, as they had expected, was calm, reasonable, precise and helpful. He quite realised that it would be inconvenient for the Great Powers themselves to settle their own difficulty. He offered to place the Greek army at their disposal. If

he were given a free hand he could guarantee that within a few weeks he would sweep the Kemalists from the zone of the Straits, both in Europe and in Asia, and remove from the minds of the Supreme Council all further anxiety regarding the Turkish nationalist movement.

The military advisers of the Supreme Council were not of the same opinion. They pointed out that the operation would be one of difficulty and danger; they doubted whether the Greek army, or the Greek generals, would be capable of executing so ambitious and arduous a task. M. Venizelos was unshaken by their criticisms. In the Attic sunlight of his serenity the Allied statesmen surrendered to optimism. That very evening telegrams were sent to Smyrna enjoining the Greek General Staff to prepare for an immediate advance.

On June 22, 1920, a Greek army corps emerged from the entrenched camp covering the Smyrna enclave. In the very first engagement the Turks were routed. By July the Greeks had occupied Broussa and joined forces with the British detachments upon the Ismid line. In the same month a second Greek army corps attacked the Turkish forces in Eastern Thrace. The Turks, with their general, were surrounded and forced to surrender. Adrianople was occupied. Greece had saved the Allied position both in Asiatic and European Turkey. It remained to deal with Kemal himself. The Greek armies advanced upon the vital strategical railway connecting Constantinople with Konia. The Kemalists fled before them. 'The Turks', Mr. Lloyd George stated in the House of Commons, 'are broken beyond repair'.

This triumphant justification of M. Venizelos and Mr. Lloyd George was too much for the nerves of the French and the Italians. They insisted that the Greeks, in freeing the zone of the Straits, had already accomplished the task demanded of them and must now be restrained. A telegram was despatched in the name of the Supreme Council ordering the Greeks to advance no further. At the eleventh hour Kemal and his recruits were thus rescued from destruction.

These events had a bad effect upon the Concert of Europe. In the first place, they confirmed Mr. Lloyd George in his opinion that the military experts were always wrong and that M. Venizelos was always right. From that moment he became convinced that the Greek army could at any moment, if requested, quell a nationalist rising in Asia Minor. In the second place the offer of M. Venizelos, and its amazing fulfilment, had placed the Supreme Council under a supreme obligation. Such a position was abhorrent to their pride. The French and the Italians thereafter conceived against the Greeks a hatred which was not to be allayed. In the third place the Greeks had been prevented, by the jealousies of the Allied Powers, from pushing their triumph to its logical conclusion. Kemal was permitted to retire to his mountain fastnesses and to lick his wounds. The Greeks were obliged to dig themselves in upon a line which was less favourable than that which, in the invitation of the Supreme Council, they had abandoned on June 22, and far more dangerous than the positions which, had the Supreme Council not checked them in the moment of victory, they could easily have occupied. For the moment all seemed well. The Supreme Council, with a sigh of

relief, if not of gratitude, settled down to the task of imposing upon the Sultan and the Constantinople Government those terms of peace which became known thereafter as the Treaty of Sèvres.

The main outlines of these terms had, after the rejection of the Curzon-Berthelot scheme of December 1919, been discussed at a meeting of the Supreme Council in London: the details had thereafter been elaborated by a Conference of Ambassadors sitting in Lord Curzon's room at the Foreign Office and under his chairmanship; the final text was approved at the Conference of San Remo in April: its main provisions were divulged by Venizelos on May 13: and the Treaty was finally signed at Sèvres on August 10, 1920.[1]

[1] The main provisions of this abortive Treaty can be outlined as follows. Turkey renounced all claims over Egypt, Cyprus, Tripoli, the Hedjaz, Yemen, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and Arabia. She ceded to Greece the whole of Eastern Thrace up to within twelve miles of Constantinople, the Gallipoli peninsula and Adrianople, and all islands of the Aegean including Imbros and Tenedos. The town of Smyrna and its hinterland were to remain under Greek administration for a period of five years, at the end of which period the inhabitants would be consulted by plebiscite as to its eventual status. The Straits of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles were to be demilitarised and placed under international supervision, Armenia was to be recognised as 'a free and independent State' and its frontier against Turkey was to be referred to the arbitrament of President Wilson. Kurdistan was to be granted autonomy and its eastern frontier was to be rectified in favour of Persia. The Turkish army was to be reduced to 15,000 men, and placed under the supervision of an Inter-Allied Commission of Control. Turkey was, for purposes of internal order, to be allowed a gendarmerie of 35,000 under foreign officers. Her finances were to be placed in the hands of a Commission composed of French, British and Italian members and possessing complete control over Turkey's budget, loans, customs, concessions and currency. The Capitulations were to be reimposed and extended, but the Powers undertook to prepare a scheme of judicial reform which should eventually take the place of the capitulatory system. Under Article 128 Turkey bound herself to recognise any new nationality acquired by Turkish citizens—a provision which was especially galling since it would enable subject races remaining in Turkey to opt for some foreign nationality and thus to enjoy the special privileges of foreigners. For the protection of these minorites elaborate stipulations were introduced, modelled partly on the old '*millet*' or 'nation' system long current in Turkey, and partly on the new system of Minority Treaties concluded between certain European States.

Concurrently with the signature of the Treaty of Sèvres, the French, British and Italian Governments concluded between themselves a 'Tripartite Agreement' whereby Asia Minor was partitioned into French and Italian zones roughly corresponding (if we exclude Smyrna) with the zones established by the Sykes-Picot agreement and the convention of St. Jean de Maurienne.

Few of those who, on that August 10, 1920, witnessed the signature of the Treaty of Sèvres can have supposed that it represented the final chapter of the Eastern Question. Still fewer could have imagined that the next chapter would so shortly be opened by one of those freaks of destiny which suggest that over the Aegean broods some baleful Erinnys, intent upon rescuing the undeserving Turk from the consequences of his ὕβρις, and on filching from the Hellene the rewards of endurance, courage and intelligence.

3

It will be remembered that in June 1917, after more than a year of civil war and diplomatic wrangle, King Constantine was expelled from Athens and his second son Alexander placed upon the throne in his stead. It might have been hoped that in that summer of 1920 the internecine struggle between the party of King Constantine and the party of Venizelos would at last be stilled. The pro-German policy of Constantine had finally been discredited: the pro-British policy of Venizelos had reaped a reward more glittering than any panhellene could ever have imagined. Greece, under the aegis of her greatest statesman, united in affection for a young, romantic and constitutional

monarch, doubled in territory and prestige, could, after twenty years of internal combat, after seven years of foreign war, at last look forward to an era of peace, concord, reconstruction and prosperity. Yet the Furies, who have with such persistence concerned themselves with the destinies of the Athenians, decided that all this was not to be.

On October 2, 1920, King Alexander, while walking in the gardens of Tatoi, was bitten in the leg by a pet monkey. The wound was neglected, blood poisoning supervened, and the young man died. An acute dynastic problem was thereby created.

In November 1919 King Alexander had morganatically married Mdlle. Manos, and to this marriage a son had just been born. M. Venizelos (who had always smiled upon the royal romance) was at first anxious to proclaim this infant as King of Greece and to provide for a regency. Unfortunately he allowed himself to be persuaded by those who argued (and with some justice) that a council of regency of so prolonged a nature would end by falling victim to party intrigue or military dictation. It was decided therefore to approach Prince Paul, the third son of the banished Constantine, who was at the time sharing the exile of his parents at a Swiss resort. The young prince replied that he would only accept the throne if the Greek people intimated by plebiscite that they did not desire the return of either his father King Constantine or of his elder brother, the Crown Prince George.

M. Venizelos, all too confident in the gratitude of his country, was perfectly prepared to consult the people. He decreed a general election. He went further. He allowed all those supporters of King Con-

stantine who had left the country to return openly to Athens and to conduct propaganda throughout the provinces. He even consented that the issue should be put before the electorate in its crudest form. The people were asked to vote on a single question, 'Were they, or were they not, in favour of the return of Constantine?' This fine gesture of liberalism was a political error. M. Venizelos, for more than twenty months, had been in Paris intent upon an achievement which will for long remain unique in the annals of diplomacy. He was out of touch with the state of opinion in his own country. He was not aware how deeply the strain of seven years of constant war had told upon the nerves of the people, or to what extent the Greek fisherman and peasant attributed to him personally their sufferings under the blockade. Forgetful of Aristides, he overestimated the capacity of his countrymen for political gratitude, even as he underestimated their ignorance of the position of Greece, and of himself, in world affairs. He was uninformed of the deplorable manner in which the country had been administered during his absence as of the constant oppression and corruption in which his lieutenants had indulged. Above all, perhaps, he failed to realise with what frenzied hatred he was regarded by the royalist party, or that they would willingly and with their own hands destroy the whole fabric of a Greater Greece if only, for a short sweet moment, they might enjoy their revenge.

The election took place on November 14, 1920. On the following morning the world was startled to learn that Venizelos had been defeated. The royalist party secured 250 seats: the party of Venizelos only mus-

tered 114. The royalists therefore controlled the administration. Conscious as they were that the return of Constantine might deprive them of the sympathy of the Allied Powers, they decided to democratise that return in the form of a national mandate. They announced that the final decision would be submitted to a plebiscite. It was a foregone conclusion that such a plebiscite would confirm the results of the General Election. Meanwhile Venizelos, who had himself been unseated at the election, left Greece for Europe on November 17, announcing that he would take no further part in public life.

The insane, the tragic, gesture of the Greek electorate was received in France and Italy with ill-disguised relief. The feminine tendency of these two countries to personify political issues enabled their Governments to repudiate, with full public approval, the debt which they owed to Greece. It was represented, and believed, that the Greece of Venizelos was a wholly different thing from the Greece of Constantine. The former, it was admitted, had rendered, in the person of Venizelos, immense services to the Allied cause: the latter, in the person of Constantine, could only be regarded as an ex-enemy. British public opinion also reacted unfavourably to the return of the exiled monarch, who, although in fact a comparatively harmless figure, had during the war achieved news-value as one of the most notable of German sympathisers. In vain did Lord Curzon and the Foreign Office endeavour to steer a reasonable course, and to indicate that Greece was not a personal issue, but a country possessing certain geographical and cultural values. The British public felt that the repudiation of Venizelos proved that the

Greek nation were volatile, stupid, and independable. 'In England', writes Mr. Churchill, 'the feeling was not resentment, but a total extinction of sympathy or even interest'.[1] No phrase could define more exactly the reaction of British opinion to the return of Constantine.

Lord Curzon, although no philhellene, was too intelligent a man to suppose that the electoral defeat of Venizelos could justify a complete reversal of Allied policy towards Greece. He suggested that Greece should still be accorded 'conditional' support and that there seemed no reason why, if Constantine returned, he should not be recognised. The Allies thought differently. They were determined not to miss this heaven-sent opportunity of ridding themselves of that irksome moral obligation which they had incurred in regard to Greece. At a meeting of the Supreme Council held in Paris on December 3, 1920, it was decided to warn the Greek people that if, at their impending plebiscite, they voted for the return of Constantine they must expect thereafter no further support from their late Allies. The Allied commination ran as follows: 'The restoration to the throne of a King whose disloyal attitude and conduct towards the Allies during the War caused them great embarrassment and loss, could only be regarded by them as a ratification by Greece of his hostile acts'. Should Constantine be recalled, 'a new and unfavourable situation' in the relations between Greece and the Allies would arise. Thereafter the Powers would 'reserve to themselves full liberty in dealing with the situation thus created'.

It is questionable whether this warning was ever

[1] *The World Crisis*, vol. v, p. 388.

communicated by the royalist Government to the unhappy Greek electorate. The latter on December 5, 1920, voted almost unanimously for the return of Constantine. A few weeks later, the exiled royal family disembarked at Phaleron amid scenes of hysterical enthusiasm.

Mr. Lloyd George, with his accustomed loyalty to his own theories, was undeterred. On December 22, 1920, he announced that the return of King Constantine would make no difference to Anglo-Hellenic amity. 'The friendship', he said, 'of the Greek people is vital to us in that part of the world, a part of the world that is vital to Great Britain, more vital than any countries in the world'. The French were much disconcerted by this pronouncement. They decided that if Mr. Lloyd George intended to support King Constantine, they for their part were fully justified in making friends with the Turks.

4

However much he might deplore the abandonment of Greece by France and Italy, Mr. Lloyd George could not blind himself to the fact that the return of Constantine rendered it impossible to impose on Turkey the whole programme of the Treaty of Sèvres.[1] At the Conference held at St. James's Palace in February 1921 he suggested important modifications of that instrument. The military clauses of the treaty

[1] 'From the moment', Mr. Lloyd George wrote to Lord Curzon at a later date, 'Greece threw over Venizelos and placed her destinies in the hands of Constantine I realised that a pro-Greek policy in Anatolia was doomed and I have agreed with you that the best we could hope to achieve in that quarter was to secure some protection for the Christian minorities. That hope is now slender.' (Letter of September 15, 1922.)

were to be altered in Turkey's favour: the Smyrna area was to remain under Turkish sovereignty but to enjoy local autonomy with a Christian governor: Constantinople would be evacuated provided that the Turks consented to cease massacring the Armenians: and Turkey would be granted the permanent presidency of the Commission of the Straits. The Government of King Constantine refused to accept these terms. They were also rejected by Mustapha Kemal.

The latter, since the Greek victories of the previous summer, had gained many advantages. In the first place he was immensely encouraged by the fall of Venizelos. In the second place his adherents had been increased and fortified by the signature and publication of the Treaty of Sèvres. And more importantly he was about to receive assistance in the form of advice and munitions from the Soviet Republic. Until August 1920 the Turks and the Russians had been obliged to rely for their communications upon the Black Sea. In view of the fact that the Allies still retained maritime supremacy this communication was uncertain. On August 10, upon the very day that the Treaty of Sèvres was signed, the Russians invaded Armenia. On September 20 Kiazim Kara Bekir Pasha, cooperating from the west, occupied Kars and Ardahan. The Turks were thereafter enabled to establish land communication with the U.S.S.R. A Russo-Turkish alliance was eventually concluded on March 16, 1921. Yet long before that date Mustapha Kemal knew that he could rely upon a constant supply of munitions across the Russian border. It was but natural that he should reject the offer tendered to him from St. James's Palace.

In May of 1921 the Allies solemnly declared their neutrality in the Graeco-Turkish conflict. Undeterred by the implications of this pronouncement, King Constantine, on June 11, assumed supreme command of the Greek forces in Asia. The British Government should at this stage have realised that, in view of their own public opinion and of the increasing hostility of the French, the only fair policy was to inform the Greeks that they could no longer be supported. No such warning was issued. The Greeks were allowed to imagine that Great Britain was tacitly in their favour. The resultant situation has been admirably summarised by Mr. Churchill. 'This', he writes, 'was the worst of all possible situations. The Greeks deserved at least either to be backed up through thick and thin with the moral, diplomatic and financial support of a united British Government, or to be chilled to the bone with repeated douches of cold water.'[1] Had this discouragement been furnished in explicit terms it is possible that the Greeks would have withdrawn to the entrenched line at Smyrna. As it was, they embarked upon an offensive against Angora. This offensive, although at first successful, was eventually checked. For an ensuing period of nine months the Greeks and the Turks remained facing each other in the centre of Asia Minor, while by successive concessions to Kemal, the Allies endeavoured to negotiate an armistice.

The French, meanwhile, pursued with unabated realism their policy of making friends with the new Turkey. Already during the St. James's Palace conference of February and March 1921 they had made it

[1] *The World Crisis*, vol. v, p. 393.

clear to the Turkish delegation that they would be willing, on terms, to discuss the evacuation of Cilicia. Lord Curzon became uneasy. His anxiety was increased when he learnt that a French deputy of the name of Franklin-Bouillon [1] had appeared at Angora charged with some semi-official mission. M. Briand assured him that M. Bouillon was in Asia Minor purely for personal and journalistic purposes, and added in an official Note that France would not think of raising the general question of peace with Turkey without a previous agreement with the British Government. In September 1921 M. Bouillon was reported to be again in Angora, and on further enquiries being addressed to them by Lord Curzon, the French Government replied that M. Bouillon had, it was true, been authorised to discuss minor points affecting the evacuation of Cilicia, but that this was no more than a '*tractation locale*' and that he had been forbidden to discuss with the Angora Government the larger question of peace.

It was thus with indignant consternation that Lord Curzon learnt that a treaty had, on October 20, 1921, been signed at Angora between M. Franklin-Bouillon and Youssouf Kemal Bey, the Nationalist Minister for Foreign Affairs. The first article of this treaty ran as follows: 'The High Contracting Parties declare that from the date of the signature of the present agreement, the state of war between them shall cease'. Under the remaining articles France agreed to evacuate Cilicia, to hand over to Turkey a large tract of territory in

[1] Henry Franklin-Bouillon, b. 1872; entered politics, 1904; Minister of Propaganda, 1917; at one time Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of Chamber

northern Syria and to restore to her the section of the Baghdad Railway between Choban-Bey and Nisibin. Annexed to this treaty was a Note addressed to M. Bouillon by Youssouf Kemal Bey in which the latter implied that in return for French assistance in solving 'all the questions relating to the sovereignty and independence of Turkey', concessions would be granted to French groups for the exploitation of iron, silver, chrome and other minerals, and that French capitalists would have an opportunity to interest themselves in Turkish banks, ports, waterways and railways.

In masterly indignation Curzon, on November 5, 1921, wrote a Note. The Franklin-Bouillon agreement had, he wrote, inspired him with feelings of 'astonishment and almost of dismay'. The first article was a flagrant violation of the treaties entered into at the outset of the war by which each ally pledged himself to conclude no separate peace with any of our common enemies. The evacuation of Cilicia was a violation of the Tripartite Agreement and of the Treaty of Sèvres. The surrender to Turkey of a large and important slice of Syrian territory was a violation of the Covenant of the League and of the whole spirit of the mandatory system. The return of Nisibin to Turkey together with a section of the Baghdad Railway constituted a serious menace to our own strategical position in Iraq. And in regard to the Agreement as a whole: 'His Majesty's Government find the utmost difficulty in recognising in its present, no doubt provisional, form any resemblance to the *tractation locale* described by M. Briand. On the contrary, it has the appearance of being a separate agreement concluded by one of the Allies with an enemy Government without consultation with the

remainder, and this impression, unless it is dissipated, cannot fail to react unfavourably upon the policy of full and complete Allied cooperation in which His Majesty's Government have always believed and which they have consistently practised in their desire to bring about a general peace in the Near East.'

The task of replying to this thunderbolt fell upon the amiable shoulders of M. de Montille, who, in the absence of M. de St. Aulaire, was in charge of the French Embassy in London. He denied that the Franklin-Bouillon Agreement could be regarded exactly as a 'separate peace': he denied that the cession of Syrian territory was a violation of the Covenant since the League had not as yet formally allocated the mandates: he expressed horror ('*une douloureuse surprise*') at the mere suggestion that the Agreement contained secret clauses or had implications other than those which appeared on the surface: and he promised that France should see to it that the Baghdad Railway was never used to our strategical disadvantage in Iraq. He concluded by expressing the hope that 'when peace has been concluded the different agreements which have been negotiated hitherto shall be adjusted in such a way as to take their place in the general settlement'.

Lord Curzon seized upon this hope as a means of extricating himself from what was clearly a fruitless controversy. In his reply of November 25, 1921, he thanked M. de Montille for the 'conciliatory tone' in which he had couched his answer and expressed 'sincere gratification at the full and frank nature' of the assurances which had been given. He took note of the French promise that the Franklin-Bouillon

Agreement would be adjusted to the general settlement, and he would therefore refrain, for the moment, from making ' explicit reservations '.

The controversy between Paris and London was thus temporarily suspended. Lord Curzon had managed to save his face.

A few weeks later the Greek army upon the Anatolian plateau were being shelled by the guns of Creusot and bombed by aeroplanes provided to Kemal from French sources. And in the Ambassadors' waiting-room at the Foreign Office sat two disconsolate suppliants. The first was King Constantine's Prime Minister, M. Gounaris. The second was M. Baltazzis, his Minister for Foreign Affairs.

5

' The ill-fated M. Gounaris ', writes Winston Churchill[1], ' flitted to and fro between Athens and London begging for money and arms to carry on the war and still more to help to get out of it. He was confronted by Lord Curzon, who soused him in sonorous correctitudes. At these interviews the main effort of Gounaris was to throw the agonised fortunes of Greece into the sole hands of Great Britain ; the main object of Lord Curzon was to avoid incurring in any form or sense this ugly responsibility.' ' This attitude ', continues Mr. Churchill, ' was justifiable in Lord Curzon, who had throughout, under the guidance of the Foreign Office, played an uncompromised, circumspect and ineffectual part, and who certainly felt no obligation and equally no desire to run any risks either personal or national for the Greeks. . . .

[1] *The World Crisis*, vol. v, p. 412.

He realised and deplored the plight of Greece; he hated the Turks, and feared their growing strength. He was scandalised by the suddenness with which the French had not only washed their hands of all Greek obligations, but had actually thrown their weight upon the Turkish side; but he was not often capable of producing real action in any sense. In deeds he rarely dinted the surface of events; but his diplomatic conversations were extremely well conducted, and there was no lack of lucid and eloquent State papers. He did not, for instance, say to Gounaris, "Evacuate Asia Minor at once or the British fleet will blockade the Piraeus". Or to the French, "Act with more comradeship in this matter or we will disinterest ourselves in Europe and withdraw our troops from the Rhine". He could not be reproached for not taking either or both of these courses or doing anything else, because he had never at any time done anything in this theatre either good or bad which deflected the march of events.'

Such an indictment cannot pass unanswered. While exaggerating Curzon's inaction, Mr. Churchill slurs over his practical difficulties. How would it have been possible, in that October of 1921, to oblige Greece by force to evacuate a territory which we were pledged by treaty to assign to her and which she had occupied at our own express invitation? Is it conceivable that Mr. Lloyd George would ever have agreed to so unjust a proposition? How would it have been possible, again, to induce the French to repudiate their treaty with Angora, or to break with Paris upon a minor issue, at the very moment when we were straining every effort to preach wisdom in regard to reparation, Upper

Silesia and the whole German problem? Had we withdrawn our forces from the Rhine, the French would have been overjoyed: within a week, their armies would have entered the Ruhr, and we should not have been enabled, when the moment came, to prevent them detaching the Rhine Provinces from the German Reich. Nor was Curzon, in fact, so inactive. He knew that during the winter months there was no danger of any serious campaign in Asia Minor. He also knew that the Greek army of 200,000 was costing the Athenian treasury some £250,000 a week. He urged the Greeks to put their case entirely in his hands, warning them that he might have to demand of them the evacuation of the Smyrna zone. He urged the Allied Governments to expedite mediation on the part of the Concert of Europe and persuaded them to fix a conference for the end of January. It was at this moment that M. Briand fell from power. M. Poincaré refused to agree to any conference and insisted upon argumentation in the form of written notes. The fall of the Italian Government also necessitated delay.

On February 15, 1922, M. Gounaris addressed to Lord Curzon a letter to the effect that while the Powers discussed mediation, Mustapha Kemal was receiving ample munitions from Russian, French and Italian sources. If Great Britain could not accord to Greece at least that support in arms and money which our Allies were giving to Turkey, then the Greek army would be forced to withdraw from Asia Minor while they were still in a position to do so. Curzon did not reply to this letter in the unequivocal terms which the situation demanded. While expressing the hope that the military situation was 'less immediately critical'

than M. Gounaris feared, he suggested that the wisest course would be to 'expedite the diplomatic solution of the anxious position in which all are placed'. And he concluded by implying that the question of the withdrawal of their armies from Asia Minor was one which the Greek Government must decide for themselves. It has since been suggested that the Greek Prime Minister interpreted the amicable condolences of Lord Curzon as an encouragement to retain the Greek armies in Anatolia. This is not correct. It is now known that on February 28, before even receiving Curzon's written reply, he telegraphed warning the Greek High Command that preparations for withdrawal and evacuation might shortly have to be made. The High Command took small notice of this instruction.

Meanwhile the Khilafat Committee in India spread the rumour that the British Government were about to furnish the Greeks with the sinews of a fresh campaign. The Viceroy telegraphed to Mr. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, asking for permission to publish a repudiation of this rumour in a form which expressed strong sympathy for Turkish aspirations. Without consulting the Cabinet, Mr. Montagu gave his consent. The Viceroy's pronouncement was published in India on March 4, 1922. Curzon was enraged. 'The part', he wrote to Mr. Montagu on March 6, 'that India has sought to play, or been allowed to play, in this series of events passes my comprehension'. To Mr. Austen Chamberlain he appealed in even more intemperate language: 'My pitch is queered, my hand is shattered. . . . If the policy of His Majesty's Government is the policy of

the Viceroy and Montagu then let Montagu go to Paris in my place and fight to obtain Adrianople and the Holy Places for his beloved Turks. He will then have the failure which his own action has rendered inevitable instead of thrusting it upon me. . . . But matters cannot rest where they are, for in that case I cannot undertake my task.'

The incident was debated in Cabinet. It was Mr. Montagu, and not Lord Curzon, who resigned.[1]

Having thus re-established his authority, Curzon grappled once again with the Near Eastern situation. On March 16 he received in his study at Carlton House Terrace the representatives of the two Turkish Governments of Constantinople and Angora. He promised them that provided the Turks would accept an armistice, he would endeavour to persuade the Greeks to evacuate Asia Minor. On March 22, 1922, he crossed to Paris and induced M. Poincaré to join him in summoning the Turks to offer an armistice to Greece in return for certain further concessions in the terms of

[1] This incident led to an exchange of amicable letters between Mr. Lloyd George and Lord Curzon which go far to dispel the legend of extreme animosity at this date. 'I feel', wrote Mr. Lloyd George on March 9, 'I must write and tell you how deeply I regret that your most difficult task has been further complicated by Montagu's folly. It is very hard on you. I am hopeful however that the prompt and decisive action taken by the Government to disown the unwarranted intervention may assist you to retrieve the position. The dismissal of Montagu will make an undoubted impression both in Paris and Angora. I trust that a few days' rest will restore your health and vigour. Ever sincerely, D. Lloyd George.'

To this Lord Curzon replied on the same day: 'My dear Prime Minister. It was very good of you to find time to write me this word of encouragement in a task which our recent colleague certainly did his best (I should hope without conscious deliberation) to render impossible, and I am more than grateful for the prompt and effective action on your part and that of my colleagues which has done all that was humanly practicable to retrieve the situation. I am sorry I have been *hors de combat* in these recent crises; for I have had a more than usually violent and painful attack. . . . I hope your native mountains may give you both the rest and the inspiration which they have more th n once done befo e.'

the Treaty of Sèvres. These concessions comprised the unconditional abandonment of any Greek claim to Smyrna, a reduction in the zone of the Straits, an increase in the armed forces to be allowed to Turkey, and a partition of Eastern Thrace between Greece and Turkey. The Greeks accepted these proposals. The Turks refused to grant an armistice unless they were promised the complete evacuation of Asia Minor within four months. The Allied Powers rejected this condition, and the negotiations thereafter, while the snow melted upon the defiles of Anatolia, languished for four months. During this tragically unfortunate suspension Curzon himself was stricken down with phlebitis. He remained in bed at Hackwood and A. J. Balfour assumed temporary charge of the Foreign Office. It was with unconcealed glee that Curzon witnessed the failure of the Genoa Conference and the damage occasioned by that and the Irish negotiations to the prestige of Lloyd George.

In July 1922 the French suggested that 'the principles of March' might now again be suggested to the Turks and that the Allies should withdraw their previous condition that an armistice must be granted before any negotiations were opened. News of this suggestion reached Athens. King Constantine decided to risk his all upon a throw of the dice. He withdrew two divisions from Smyrna, landed them at Rodosto on the Sea of Marmora and announced his intention of seizing Constantinople. The Allies informed him that they would oppose such a manœuvre by force of arms. King Constantine was thus obliged to desist from a scheme which he could easily have executed, which would have revived the failing con-

fidence of his army, and which would have placed him in possession of an invaluable asset in any future negotiations. Mr. Lloyd George's sense of fair play was outraged by this injustice. On August 4, 1922, he rose from the Government bench in the House of Commons and gave vent to an outburst of indignation as honourable as it was indiscreet. He spoke as follows: 'Peace the Kemalists will not accept, because they say we will not give them satisfactory armistice terms; but we are not allowing the Greeks to wage the war with their full strength. We cannot allow that sort of thing to go on indefinitely in the hope that the Kemalists entertain that they will at last exhaust this little country, whose men have been in arms for ten or twelve years with one war or another, and which has no indefinite resources.'

It has frequently been stated that this speech drove the Kemalists to launch an immediate offensive. This is untrue. The offensive had been decided upon so soon as Constantine withdrew his divisions for the Constantinople venture. The speech of Mr. Lloyd George occurred after Mustapha Kemal had already planned his attack. That attack was launched on August 18. By August 26 the Greeks were in full retreat. With blood and fire the nationalists descended upon the town of Smyrna. Within a fortnight nothing but the corpses of Greek soldiers remained in Anatolia.

6

On Friday, September 15, 1922, the Cabinet met in anxious session. Until that moment the Greek army had acted as a screen between the Allied forces pro-

tecting the zone of the Straits and the Kemalist army. This screen lay gashed and tattered at our feet. It was a matter of days only before our thin and scattered detachments would be brought face to face with an Ottoman army inflamed by victory, arson and blood. On the previous day M. Poincaré had agreed to join in an intimation warning Mustapha Kemal not to violate the zone of the Straits. Fortified by this semblance of cooperation the Cabinet decided not to tolerate any nationalist threat to our lines of occupation. It was agreed that we should resist by war any attempt upon the part of the Kemalists to cross from Asia to Europe or to gain possession of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. Curzon himself, in Cabinet, expressed the view that it would be a 'gross and ridiculous exaggeration' to suppose that Kemal would dare to fire a single shot at the Allied detachments. The Cabinet were inclined to take no risks. Telegrams were addressed to the Allies, to the Dominions and to the Balkan States warning them that the freedom of the Straits was now in danger and inviting them to resist that danger by force of arms. Having despatched these telegrams Curzon, on Saturday, September 16, retired to Hackwood. This was an inexcusable departure. On that Saturday Mr. Winston Churchill, who until then had favoured the pro-Turkish group in the Cabinet, emerged from his glum and critical tent, fully armed for combat. The ensuing crisis is best described in his own words:

> 'I found myself in this business with a small group of resolute men: the Prime Minister, Lord Balfour, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Lord Birkenhead, Sir Laming Worthington Evans.... We made common cause. The

Government might break up and we might be relieved of our burden. The nation might not support us: they would find others to advise them. The Press might howl, the Allies might bolt. We intended to force the Turk to a negotiated peace before he should set foot in Europe. The aim was modest, but the forces were small.'

It is sad for any admirer of Lord Curzon to have to admit that he himself can claim no share in this reckless and triumphant gesture. To Mr. Lloyd George, and above all to Mr. Churchill, is due our gratitude for having, at this juncture, defied, not the whole world merely, but the full hysterical force of British public opinion. Lord Curzon, when he returned on Monday, read 'with consternation' the bellicose communiqué[1] which Mr. Churchill had issued. He saw at once that it might lead to a rupture with the French. He offered to cross to Paris and to face Poincaré alone. It was suggested that perhaps Lord Birkenhead might bear him company. He insisted that he should go unaccompanied.

The effect of Mr. Churchill's communiqué had, as Curzon foresaw, produced in M. Poincaré an outburst of reckless indignation. He was determined not to

[1] This communiqué was issued by Mr. Churchill on the afternoon of Saturday, September 17, 1922: 'The British Government', it ran, 'regard the effective and permanent freedom of the Straits as a vital necessity'. 'It would be futile and dangerous, in view of the excited mood and extravagant claims of the Kemalists, to trust simply to diplomatic action. Adequate force must be available to guard the freedom of the Straits and to defend the deep water line between Europe and Asia against a violent and hostile Turkish aggression.' The communiqué then continued to say that the British Government had appealed to the Dominion Governments and to Foreign Powers 'inviting them to be represented by contingents in the defence of interests for which they have already made enormous sacrifices.... It is the intention of His Majesty's Government to reinforce immediately, and if necessary to a considerable extent, the troops at the disposal of Sir Charles Harington and orders have also been given to the British fleet in the Mediterranean to oppose by any means an infraction of the neutral zones by the Turks or any attempt by them to cross to the European shore.'

become the Leonidas of Mr. Lloyd George's Thermopylae. He at once telegraphed orders that the French contingent which, by arrangement between the Allied commanders at Constantinople, had been sent to help us at Chanak should be recalled. The Italians, two days before, had already assured Kemal of their neutrality. Our slender forces, abandoned by their Allies in the moment of danger, faced Kemal alone. We had but three hundred rifles and a single strand of wire. Yet Kemal also had read the Churchill communiqué. He sheered away from Chanak and marched onwards to the Ismid peninsula. Great Britain thereby was granted a respite of ten incalculably valuable days.

On September 20, 1922, Lord Curzon crossed to Paris. Immediately on arrival he despatched one of his staff to interview the Rumanian Minister, M. Antonescu, and to enquire whether there was any prospect of Rumania, now that France had deserted us, sending any troops. M. Antonescu, (not an amiable man), was non-committal. But he informed the Quai d'Orsay of the overtures which he had received.

The rage of Poincaré at this tampering with a member of the Little Entente knew no bounds. At the first session of the Conference Lord Curzon, in precise but cutting phrases, summarised the disloyalty of the French during the last two years, of which the betrayal of their British comrades behind the wire entanglement of Chanak was but the final culmination. In the afternoon M. Poincaré responded to this attack. His voice was dry, his words were clipped, his insults were lancets of steel. Curzon's wide white hands upon the green baize cloth trembled violently. He could stand

it no further. Rising from his seat he muttered something about an adjournment and limped hurriedly into the adjoining room. He was accompanied by his secretaries and by Lord Hardinge, then our Ambassador in Paris. He collapsed upon a scarlet settee. He grasped Lord Hardinge by the arm. 'Charley', he panted, 'I can't bear that horrid little man. I can't bear him. I can't bear him.'

He wept.

The Conference, largely owing to the tact of the Italian representative, Count Sforza, was resumed. Reproaches were abandoned; practical arrangements were discussed. It was agreed that General Harington, with the support of his French colleague, should meet Kemal at Mudania and fix a line beyond which the Turks should not advance. Curzon returned to London and received the congratulations of the Cabinet.[1] It seemed as if the crisis were passed.

At that moment, however, a revolution broke out in Athens, King Constantine was for the second and last time driven into exile, and a military government was established, favourable to, but not identical with, M. Venizelos. M. Poincaré, and Lord Curzon also, were afraid that this might lead to a revival of pro-Greek feeling in England. Mustapha Kemal derived the same impression. His troops were ordered to advance on Chanak and appeared outside our wire

[1] These were not the only congratulations he received. 'I must', wrote Lord Grey of Fallodon on September 26, 'congratulate you very sincerely and cordially on what you have done in Paris. It seems to me a great and most valuable public service in a very grave crisis. . . . Difficult as the whole Near Eastern situation may still be, our own position in it might, but for your success in Paris, have been that of standing alone on the Straits, as the one anti-Moslem Power with an inflamed Moslem world beyond the Straits and an almost unfriendly Europe behind us. That appalling position I hope you have saved us from.'

entanglements, grinning at our slender line with amicable, and by no means discourteous, expectation. On September 29, the Cabinet decided to instruct Sir Charles Harington to deliver an ultimatum threatening war unless the Kemalists withdrew. Lord Curzon was opposed to so irretrievable a measure and begged that at least twenty-four hours' delay might ensue in order that once again he might endeavour to enlist the cooperation of M. Poincaré. The party of action in the Cabinet paid no heed to his proposals. Curzon's only supporters were Sir A. Griffith-Boscawen and Mr. Stanley Baldwin. The communiqué of September 16 had been a stroke of reckless genius and had been justified by the result: the ultimatum of September 29, although equally reckless, was not, at that moment, essential. Although one may regret Curzon's repudiation of the former, his opposition to the latter was far-sighted and wise. Fortunately Great Britain was at that moment represented in Constantinople by two men of rare experience and courage, by Sir Charles Harington, the General Officer commanding the British forces of occupation, and Sir Horace Rumbold, the High Commissioner. These two shared Curzon's opinion that an ultimatum was, at that moment, gratuitous and premature. They took upon themselves the responsibility of ignoring their instructions. For this act of prudence they were subsequently thanked by the Cabinet. And in fact they saved us from a war which, as events proved, would have been wholly unnecessary.

On October 11, 1922, General Harington crossed to Asia and met Ismet Pasha at Mudania. The Turks demanded that they should at once be allowed to cross the Straits and to occupy Eastern Thrace. General

Charpy the French commander, accepted this demand. General Harington refused it. M. Franklin-Bouillon, who had again appeared upon the scene, flitted between Ismet Pasha and General Charpy urging the former to resistance and the latter to surrender. Ismet Pasha, thus encouraged, stated that unless his demands were accepted he would attack Chanak at 2.0 p.m. on October 6. Curzon again crossed hurriedly to Paris. From 11.0 p.m. on October 6 until 3.0. a.m. on October 7 he remained closeted with M. Poincaré. He made it clear to him that the British, with or without the Allies, would resist an attack upon our position at Chanak by force of arms. He indicated that since September 16 our slender battalions had been strengthened and that further reinforcements were on their way. M. Poincaré hesitated. In the early hours of the morning he agreed to a compromise by which the Greeks would withdraw to the line of the Maritza and Eastern Thrace would be occupied by Allied detachments pending its final restoration to the Turks. On this understanding he telegraphed to General Charpy ordering him to support General Harington in insisting on these terms. It was in these circumstances that the convention of Mudania was signed. Curzon returned to London to receive, for the second time, the congratulations of a disunited, and by then dissolving, Cabinet upon the 'important services' which he had rendered 'to the country, to the Alliance, and to the cause of peace'.

7

The daring displayed by Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Winston Churchill in thus saving Great Britain

from humiliation at the hands of Mustapha Kemal was not, at the time, appreciated by the British press or public. An attack was launched accusing the Coalition Government of having with reckless levity brought Great Britain to within an inch of war. The rank and file of the Conservative party, who had for months been chafing under the dictatorship of Lloyd George, could no longer be restrained. A meeting of the National Union of Conservative Associations was fixed for November 13, 1922.

Those Conservative Ministers who remained loyal to the Coalition and its leader dined at Mr. Winston Churchill's house on the night of Wednesday, October 11. Curzon was present at that dinner. It was decided that the Government should forestall the meeting of the National Union and should appeal to the country, as a coalition, before November 13. In other words they were prepared to place their loyalty to Mr. Lloyd George above their loyalty to the Conservative party. Curzon agreed with this decision.

He was a prey during the anxious hours which followed to many conflicting interests and emotions. On the one side was his faith; on the other, his temperament. The immediate issue had arisen over the determination of the Prime Minister not to allow the spate of Turkish nationalism to pour into the Balkans uncanalised and unrestricted. However much Curzon may have disapproved of the methods of the last few weeks, he could not disguise from himself that the principle which had thus been maintained was among the cardinal articles of his own faith. It was irksome also to betray a coalition which—in spite of the fret, fume and fury of the last three years—would live for ever in

English history; to abandon the giants with whom he had worked through all those vital years for the drab pygmies of the Carlton Club. The Prime Minister might have his faults and his garden suburb, yet he was, after all, Lloyd George. How could he, when Chamberlain was ready to sacrifice a real prospect of the Premiership, when Churchill was willing to stake his whole future, how could he, George Curzon, be the first of the war veterans to desert a ship which, when he came to think of it, might take some time to sink?

On the other hand there was his temperament. Had not the garden suburb, during that very week, been discovered in negotiation with an Italian envoy behind the back of the Foreign Office? Had not Lloyd George been seeing Diamandy? Had he not been excluded, in circumstances of overt ignominy, from the Lympne conference in April 1921, and had he not again and again, in front of all those foreigners, been snubbed by the Prime Minister in conference after conference? How could he be expected to owe loyalty to such a man? And what was more, Lloyd George had frequently rejected his advice. Egypt, Turkey, Greece, Russia, Genoa—on all these issues Curzon had been right and the Prime Minister had been wrong. It was merely his own high public spirit which had led him to endure these mortifications. But there was a limit. That limit had now been reached.

Besides, supposing the Coalition failed to win the general election. Such an event was not possible only; it was actually probable. The little man had lost his grip over the electorate. The rise in unemployment, the Irish settlement, the failure of the Genoa Conference, the Geddes Committee, this Greek disaster had

all contributed to undermine his popularity and prestige. Supposing that the Conservatives obtained a majority? Who would then be Prime Minister? Austen Chamberlain, owing to his old-fashionable loyalties, would be out of the running. There was only Bonar Law, an ailing and unambitious man. And if Bonar Law refused, then there was only one person who . . .

Obviously it had been a great mistake to have been so precise, so sentimental, last night at Churchill's dinner party.

On the following day, Thursday, October 12, 1922, a meeting of the Conservative members of Mr. Lloyd George's Cabinet took place at No. 11 Downing Street, the residence of Mr. Austen Chamberlain. It was then apparent to his fellow guests of the evening before that Curzon, in the night watches, had come to regret his previous decision. He stated that on reflection he had come to realise what damage would be done to the Near Eastern problem were a general election to be held before November 13 in England. The Conference would have to be postponed, and in the interval the embers which had been damped at Mudania might again crackle into flames. He still delayed, however, committing himself to any final decision. Two days later Mr. Lloyd George himself provided him with the occasion and the excuse which he desired. The Prime Minister, on that Saturday, October 14, made a speech at Manchester in which he spoke of the Turks as cut-throats and barbarians and implied that the French were treacherous and deficient in courage. Such a statement, on the eve of a critical conference with French and Turks, was not calculated to ease Curzon's position or his task. It was this speech which

finally determined that change of attitude on his part which Mr. Churchill has condemned as 'sudden and nimble' and which he himself described as 'slow and perhaps even belated'. He addressed to Mr. Lloyd George a letter of resignation. The Prime Minister begged him, as a personal favour, to suspend that letter for three more days. Curzon consented.

On Sunday, October 15, Mr. Churchill had a second dinner party which Lord Curzon refused to attend. On Tuesday, October 17, Lloyd George invited Curzon to Downing Street and 'with moving sentences and in a voice charged with emotion' begged him not to abandon his old comrades in arms. 'He asked me', records Curzon, 'not to forget the great scenes in which we had jointly taken part and the common comradeship of the war, and thanked me for the loyalty which I had consistently shown both in speech and action to him. I could not, or at least I did not, question the sincerity of these utterances, sharply as they contrasted with the treatment I had so often received at his hands. They enabled us to part in the most friendly fashion.'

On Thursday, October 19, Mr. Bonar Law informed a meeting at the Carlton Club that the Conservative party could not any longer support the coalition. Mr. Lloyd George immediately resigned. On October 26 Parliament was dissolved. The general election of November 15 placed the Conservative party in power. Mr. Bonar Law formed his Cabinet immediately and confirmed Curzon in his office as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Lord Curzon left London for Lausanne at 2.0 p.m. on Friday, November 17, 1922.



LORD CURZON ATTENDS THE FIRST MEETING OF THE BONAR LAW CABINET

Chapter X

LAUSANNE: THE OPENING MANŒUVRES

November-December 1922

Curzon's main objective the restoration of British prestige—He hoped to achieve this by dislocating the Russo-Turkish Alliance, and by securing a British triumph on Straits and Mosul questions—The odds against him—Turkish arrogance, Allied disunity, and lack of support from British Government or opinion—His assets—The Balkan States—The harmonious relations between the French and British delegations at Lausanne—His tactics—First secures agreement in principle with Poincaré and Mussolini—Secondly secures for himself virtual presidency of the Conference—Thirdly uses this position to arrange the time-table in such a way that from the start Turks are isolated and Allies united—He thus begins with Thrace—His handling of that problem—Then tackles the Islands—Then prepares to embark on Straits question—Three unfortunate incidents—The execution of Gounaris—The Gounaris letter and Parliamentary criticism of Curzon—An Italian attempt at blackmail—Having surmounted these, he opens Straits discussion—Essence of Straits problem—Curzon's handling of the discussion—Challenges Ismet Pasha to commit himself definitely either to Russia or the Allies—Ismet chooses latter—Curzon triumphant.

I

THOSE few readers who have had the patience to follow this unhappy narrative to the point which has now been reached will be feeling crushed under an accumulated load of error, cowardice, dissension, jealousy and mischance. 'Why', they will ask, 'should so much trouble have been taken to inform us of the doubts, difficulties and hesitations of a man who, although greatly gifted, allowed Mr. Lloyd George to conduct a policy which, four years after our supreme victory, left the British Empire with scant vestige of authority either in Asia or in Europe?'

Had Curzon retired into private life on that October 19, 1922, there would have been no adequate answer to such a question. It was his superb direction of foreign policy during his last year of office which not only restored British prestige in three continents, but renders him one of the most interesting, as one of the most perplexing, of British Foreign Secretaries.

The Lausanne Conference re-established his reputation and his self-confidence. His handling of that Assembly will always remain among the classic examples of expert diplomacy. It will thus be mainly from the angle of diplomatic technique that this abortive Conference will be examined.

Curzon, on leaving London on November 17, 1922, had one essential objective in view, namely the restoration of British diplomatic credit. To that main objective all other considerations were subordinate. In order to attain his objective it was essential for him to achieve success upon the three points which (rightly or wrongly) were regarded by world-opinion as the central issues between Great Britain and Turkey. The first was the freedom of the Straits. The second was Mosul. The third was the alliance between Angora and Moscow. If Curzon could capture these three strategical positions, he had won his victory. If he failed to occupy these positions, then it would be many years before our prestige could be restored.

Before discussing the strategy and tactics adopted by Curzon in attaining these objectives, it will be necessary to describe the nature of the ground across which he was obliged to operate, and to indicate how very slender were the forces of which he could dispose.

The odds against him were tremendous. He was faced by a Turkish Delegation entrenched behind three formidable convictions from which it seemed impossible that they could ever be dislodged. Their first conviction was that Turkey was the conqueror of the world and could claim a conqueror's peace. Their second conviction was that not Russia only, but also France and Italy, were Turkey's allies. Their third conviction was that the British people, in repudiating Lloyd George and Churchill, had demonstrated that they also would in no circumstances oppose Turkish desires.

In face of so obstinate and convinced an opponent, Curzon could rely upon no certain assistance on the part of his major allies. Whatever promises he may have been able to extract from M. Poincaré before entering upon the Lausanne campaign, it was evident that the Anglo-French Alliance, in so far as the two Governments were concerned, was already an alliance only in name. At the very culmination of the Lausanne Conference (on January 4, 1923) France and Great Britain were publicly divorced. The French, in defiance of British objections, entered the Ruhr on January 11: the Entente had been dissolved, nor could Great Britain expect any alimony from the France of Raymond Poincaré. Curzon knew therefore that he would receive no continuous support from France, and suspected that at any moment he might have to count on her hostility. He was justified in this suspicion. On January 30, as will be recounted later, M. Poincaré tried once again to stab the Alliance in the back.

The attitude of Italy was equally uncertain. The

Fascist revolution was then but three weeks old, the true features of Mussolini were still obscured by the dust and fervour of the march on Rome. It was not to be supposed that at such a moment Italy would join with England in putting pressure on the Turks. Curzon knew that he would have to fight his battle in spite of his allies.

Even more disturbing was the consideration that he could rely on small support from home. Not only did the popular press proclaim to the world, and to the Turkish Delegation, that Curzon had against him the united weight of British public opinion, but the Cabinet of Mr. Bonar Law was hesitant, uncertain, discouraging, frightened and supine. 'It will', wrote Curzon on the day after the Conference opened, 'be a long and desperate struggle.' He entered upon that struggle, disarmed, unsupported and alone. He had little confidence in the prospects of his own success. 'I do not think', he wrote to Lady Curzon on the second day of the Conference, 'that I shall ever be Prime Minister, nor am I fitted for it. The chances against a success here are so great that my shares will go down.'

Yet he had his assets: they were meagre, but liquid. There was his own personality—that commanding presence, his immense experience, his unsurpassed knowledge, his mastery in debate. There was the fact that the Balkan States, who though minor were on the spot, inclined to our side. Jugoslavia and Rumania could exercise a slight, but not wholly ineffectual, pressure upon M. Poincaré. There came a point where the latter's desire to humiliate England and to please the Turks would conflict with his desire to crush and

encircle Germany with the aid of the Powers of the Little Entente.

Secondly, and perhaps predominantly, there was Chanak. The impression created abroad by that superb gesture of unwisdom cannot be overstated. In spite of its repudiation by the British electorate, in spite of the repeated assurances of the *Daily Mail*, the Turks and Russians never, after that fierce spasm of vitality, felt absolutely certain that the British lion was permanently dead. They were never certain that we might not, one day, repeat that hazardous challenge. Upon the French, also, Chanak had its effect. It is not a habit of the French nation to abandon an ally at a moment of extreme physical peril. M. Poincaré's 'coup de Chanak' afflicted the majority of his countrymen with a sense of shame. In spite of the Ruhr and Reparation, and underneath the conflict of governments, there came a revival of the Entente spirit. This revival was most marked at Lausanne. The French Delegation to that Conference was composed of men of a calibre far different from that of Franklin-Bouillon, from that even of M. Poincaré. At its head stood Camille Barrère,[1] the veteran French Ambassador in Rome, a man of the highest intelligence and integrity. For more technical questions, such as the Ottoman debt and the capitulations, M. Barrère was assisted by M. Maurice Bompard,[2] for long French Ambassador in Russia and Turkey. As chief military adviser came General Weygand, the saviour of Poland, the friend and coadjutor of Marshal Foch. General Weygand

[1] M. Camille Barrère, b. 1851; French Ambassador in Rome since 1897.

[2] M. Maurice Bompard, b. at Metz, 1854; Ambassador in Russia, 1902-1907, and in Turkey, 1909-1914. A member of the French Senate.

was not a politician. At moments of difficulty, he would slowly pull from his pocket a tobacco pouch bound in the colours of the British Brigade of Guards. He was a man who liked to remember Flanders and who hated to remember Chanak. His British colleagues, General Burnett-Stuart and Colonel Heywood, were all too glad to assist him in such lapse of memory. The French naval adviser, Admiral Lacaze, for his part also, felt a greater community of sympathy between himself and Sir Roger Keyes than he could possibly bring himself to extend to Captain Shevket Bey, the naval expert of the Turkish Delegation. M. Fromageot, the French jurist, had behind him years of friendly collaboration with Mr. William Malkin, our own legal adviser. M. René Masigli, the Secretary-General of the Conference, M. Serruys, the commericial expert, M. Laroche and M. Bargeton of the diplomatic section, each felt happier and more at home with men like Mr. Fountain of the Board of Trade, or Mr. Waley of the Treasury, or the members of the Foreign Office section,[1] than they did with Sekiai Bey, the deputy from Adana, or with Shukri Kaya Bey, the mayor of Smyrna. The freemasonry of the expert, the memories of other dangers, other triumphs, shared in common, was a bond stronger than any agreement which M. Franklin-Bouillon might have signed. From the very first, relations of complete confidence and personal friendship existed between the technical staffs of the French and British Delegations. Here was a cir-

[1] Lord Curzon had with him as second plenipotentiary, Sir Horace Rumbold, British High Commissioner at Constantinople. The Foreign Office section was headed by Sir William Tyrrell and (in the later stages of the Conference) by Sir Eyre Crowe. Other prominent Foreign Office experts were Sir Andrew Ryan, Mr. J. Bullard, Mr. Eric Forbes Adam, and Mr. A. W. Allen Leeper. Sir Adam Block attended as adviser on Turkish finance.

cumstance which neither the Turkish Delegation, nor yet M. Poincaré, nor even Lord Curzon, had foreseen. It was a most important circumstance.

2

Conscious as he was of the obstructions against which he would have to contend, Lord Curzon had been careful, before he left London, to make it abundantly clear to M. Poincaré that the British Government would refuse to enter any conference unless a formal and explicit understanding were reached in advance with France and Italy; and unless a united front as between the three major Allies were first constituted, and thereafter maintained. M. Poincaré, being himself a formalist, was unable to decline such a proposition: however much he may have resented Curzon's preparatory insistence, he recognised that in this, at least, he was dealing with no amateur diplomatist. M. Poincaré agreed. On the strength of the written assurances which he had elicited, Curzon crossed to Paris and held a protracted, precise and not wholly inimical discussion with M. Poincaré on Saturday, November 18. The united front which he had hoped to integrate was for the moment dislocated by the fact that the Sultan of Turkey had on the previous day incontinently escaped from his palace and taken refuge upon a British battleship. Lord Curzon was able to convince the French Prime Minister that this gesture on the part of Vahd-ed-Din Effendi was no prearranged plot on the part of the British Government but a perfectly natural motion of escape from the, by then, encroaching Kemalists. After five hours of discussion, the temperature of which only at one point (at the

mention of Franklin-Bouillon) rose markedly above normal, an agreement upon a joint basis of policy was reached. A communiqué was published to the effect that the Paris conversations had 'fully confirmed the complete accord between the Allies on all matters to be discussed'. This was a most helpful communiqué.

Having thus publicly committed the French to co-operation, it remained to bring Italy into line with the common front thus, overtly if only temporarily, established. An intricate situation, in this connexion, arose. A joint telegram was sent to Mussolini, inviting him to meet the French and British Ministers at Lausanne on the following evening, namely Sunday, November 19. On the morning of that day Lord Curzon, M. Poincaré and their respective Delegations entrained jointly for Switzerland. On reaching Pontarlier a telephone message was received from Mussolini. He was on his way. He was in fact coming in person. It was important, however, that they should come to meet him, rather than that he should come to meet them. He would therefore stop his train at Territet. He invited M. Poincaré and Lord Curzon to continue their journey beyond Lausanne as far as Territet. He would be delighted, at the latter resort, to entertain them to dinner. He would not, however, be prepared to come as far as Lausanne.

M. Poincaré interpreted this message as a desire on the part of Mussolini to force the representatives of France and Great Britain to come as suppliants to the newly-established Fascio. Lord Curzon agreed with this interpretation. Yet whereas M. Poincaré regarded the proposal as an insult, Lord Curzon regarded

it as highly romantic. He was delighted by the boyish naïveté of the request and was himself quite prepared to expend another hour of travel in pandering to the whim of this, as it then seemed, provisional dictator. M. Poincaré, who had none of Curzon's humour or romanticism, fretted at one end of the presidential train. Curzon, at the other end of the train, was back at Balliol, laughing heartily at the predicament in which that ghastly civil servant Poincaré had been placed. In all solemnity he sent a message along the platform to M. Poincaré to the effect that the real motive of Mussolini was not so much to humiliate France and Great Britain as a certain awkwardness about appearing at Lausanne. His last visit to that lake-side city had ended in his being expelled by the police. M. Poincaré took this message seriously. The presidential train snorted out of Pontarlier on its way, not to Lausanne, but onwards to Territet. Four hours later, after the conclusion of the Territet conversations, M. Poincaré was justly indignant when Mussolini, in his own special train, led the way back again towards Lausanne.

On the following morning, Monday, November 20, the conversations were resumed in Lord Curzon's sitting-room at the Hotel Beau Rivage at Ouchy-Lausanne. Mussolini, who had slept the night at the same hotel, was deliberately late for the appointment. M. Poincaré paced the room in irritation, tapping his rimless pince-nez against his thumb-nail. Curzon, in a vast white Louis XV armchair—his leg thrust straight in front of him upon a green baize foot-rest—could not forbear to smile. He did more than smile. He grinned. Poincaré walked away from him towards

the window, gazing impatiently upon the catalpa in the garden below.

The conversations, when at last they opened, were not unremunerative. Mussolini—a shade embarrassed by being thus confronted at his first diplomatic conference by such giants of the profession—chafed uneasily against his stiff white cuffs, rolling important eyes. He said little. 'Je suis d'accord' was the most important thing that he said. And that was very important: it meant, for a few days at least, the affirmation of the united front: it meant, as against Turkey, the establishment of an Allied block.

3

Curzon, having by these conversations improved his strategical position, now concentrated upon tactics.

At 3.30 p.m. on Monday, November 20, the Conference was formally opened by M. Haab, at that time President of the Swiss Confederation. The speeches—except for a regrettable, and for Great Britain most repaying, outburst on the part of Ismet Pasha—were formal in character. On the next day M. Poincaré returned to Paris, and Mussolini to Rome. Lord Curzon was left with no opponent and no colleague of his own calibre. M. Venizelos was the only delegate of his own standard: and the great Cretan was diminished in authority by the position of impotence in which he was placed.

Curzon's main asset, and one of which he was abundantly convinced, was his own pre-eminence. It was essential, he felt, that he should himself preside over the Conference, at least during its initial stages. Not only would he be enabled thereby to control



THE LAUSANNE CONFERENCE:

Opening luncheon November, 1922

Front Row: Lord Curzon, M. Mussolini, M. Poincaré.

Second Row: Sir Horace Rumbold, M. Bompard, Marchese Garroni, M. Duca, M Barrère.

developments, but, once he had imposed his personality, his dominance would enhance British prestige. Yet there was a serious difficulty which obstructed this his first, and perhaps most important, tactical move. The rule was that a Conference held on Swiss territory should be presided over by a Swiss citizen. The Federal Government had been careful to renounce that honour in advance. It had thus been agreed during the Paris conversations that the presidency of the Conference should be exercised in strict rotation by 'the Powers who had organised the Conference', or in other words by Great Britain, France and Italy. Curzon evaded this rotation with consummate ingenuity. From the first moment he announced that it would fall to the 'senior' representative of the 'Powers which had organised the Conference' to preside at the meeting which would follow the opening ceremony. No other delegate had the courage to enquire upon what qualifications that 'seniority' was based. At the second plenary session of the Conference, at which its own procedure was to be determined, it was thus Lord Curzon who assumed the chair. He suggested that it would be more convenient if the Conference were to constitute itself into three main Committees. The first Committee would deal with territorial matters and would be presided over by himself. The second Committee would examine the capitulations and minorites and Marchese Garroni would occupy the chair. The third Committee would discuss financial and economic matters under the presidency of M. Barrère. 'Our plenary sessions', announced Lord Curzon, 'will be extremely rare.'

Curzon then proceeded to point out that it would be

impossible for the three Committees to sit simultaneously since the more important delegates would have to attend them all. He proposed, therefore, that 'the first, or territorial, Committee should sit to begin with, and that the Conference should wait before embarking upon the work of the other Committees until the first had made some progress'.

He made this announcement with such unruffled lucidity, with so innocent an assumption of reasonableness, that it was not until they read the minutes next morning that the other delegates realised that Lord Curzon, with a skill which compelled their admiration, had collared the presidency of the Conference for himself. There were in fact no further 'plenary' sessions. The Conference always functioned in the form of a Committee. And of the three Committees, that of which Lord Curzon was chairman occupied a central position both in space and time. The first sixteen meetings of the Conference were held under the guise of being a Territorial Committee and thus under Curzon's presidency. His own Committee held in all some twenty-six meetings. The meetings of M. Barrère's Committee were reduced to six. Those of Marchese Garroni's Committee were reduced to five. It was by this technical adjustment that Curzon from the start obtained control of procedure.

That was an important advantage to have obtained. It carried with it the organisation and timing of the agenda. Here again Curzon displayed unrivalled technical capacity. He so arranged the time-table that the subjects in which the Turks were in a weak position should be taken first: whereas the subjects in which they were in a strong position or could hope for

Russian support were postponed. Thus by the time that the Conference came to approach its more delicate problems, Curzon had been able to establish his own authority, to demonstrate the solidarity of the European Powers, and to discover from what angle, and in what manner, the Turkish Delegation could best be tackled.

With this in mind he decided that the first subject for discussion should be that of Thrace.[1] His selection of this problem, and the mastery with which he handled it, were so characteristic of his tactical ingenuity that it is worth while examining in some detail the discussion which took place.

No subject was better calculated to place the Turks in a false position from the very start, or from the very start to demonstrate the solidarity of the European Powers. On the one hand in demanding, not Eastern Thrace only, but Western Thrace as well, Ismet Pasha was asking to have restored to him a European province which Turkey had lost some ten years ago.

[1] The River Maritza divides Thrace into two distinct sections, namely Western Thrace and Eastern Thrace.

Western Thrace, almost in its entirety, was ceded by Turkey to Bulgaria by the Treaty of Bucharest which concluded the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. In 1915, as part of the price for Bulgaria's entry into the war, Turkey was obliged under German pressure to cede the remaining strip, namely the Karagatch-Demotika area. By Article 48 of the Treaty of Peace with Bulgaria signed at Neuilly on November 27, 1919, Western Thrace was ceded by Bulgaria to the principal Allied and Associated Powers. The latter by the 'Thracian Treaty' of August 10, 1920, transferred it to Greece. This latter treaty had not been ratified.

Eastern Thrace had, under the Treaty of Sèvres, been given to Greece as far as the Chatalja lines. In their subsequent offers to Turkey the Allies progressively reduced the Greek area, and finally, by the Convention of Mudania, promised that the whole province should be restored to Turkey.

The ethnical statistics for these two provinces were unreliable, since many migrations had since taken place. For what they were worth they ran as follows:

Western Thrace: Greeks 44,000; Turks 124,000; Bulgarians 29,500.
Eastern Thrace: Greeks 395,515; Turks 344,011; Bulgarians 67,843.

On the other hand, not only were France and Italy bound by the Paris conversations and those of Territet to oppose this claim; not only were Greece, Rumania and Jugoslavia determined that no such extension should be permitted to Turkey in Europe; but even Bulgaria, Turkey's ex-ally, was prepared to join with the other Balkan States in rejecting any such disposal of a province which she hoped, one day, to recover for herself.

At the first meeting, on November 22, Ismet Pasha was asked by Lord Curzon to formulate his demands. He claimed the whole of Eastern Thrace plus the Karagatch-Demotika section which Turkey had ceded to Bulgaria in 1915. He also asked for a plebiscite in Western Thrace. The Greeks, the Jugoslavs and the Rumanians joined in opposing this claim. At the second meeting Lord Curzon produced M. Stamboliisky, the Prime Minister of Bulgaria. This enormous man mumbled enormously. The substance of his remarks were then translated into fluent French and English by Miss Nadejda Stancioff, his secretary. The charm and brilliance with which she executed this trying task did not conceal from Lord Curzon that M. Stamboliisky had said that he 'rejoiced at the victories of the Turks who should be rewarded and guaranteed', nor from Ismet Pasha that the Bulgarian Delegation had at the same time expressed themselves as strongly opposed to a plebiscite in Western Thrace. Lord Curzon then called upon the Turkish Delegation to reply to these objections. Ismet Pasha, disconcerted, answered that he would prefer to reserve his reply. This gave Lord Curzon the opening for which he had been waiting. He begged Ismet Pasha 'in all friend-

ship and regard ' not to delay the proceedings of the Conference by reserving his replies for subsequent meetings, and he exhorted him to confine his claims to the demands of his own national programme which the Powers were perfectly willing to concede ' and not to render the negotiation more difficult by persisting in demands which it would be quite impossible to grant '. He then in a rapid but detailed analysis sketched the past history and present condition of the two Thraces and summarised the reasons why the Allied and European Powers could not possibly allow the question of Western Thrace to be raised.

At the next meeting Ismet Pasha read a long and highly involved reply in the course of which he made some passing reference to the possibility of establishing demilitarised zones in Thrace. Before the Pasha could quite realise what had happened Lord Curzon was thanking him warmly for his helpful ' proposal ' and suggesting that a sub-committee of experts should at once meet under the chairmanship of General Weygand to work out upon a map the demilitarised zones which Ismet Pasha had ' suggested '. Ismet Pasha was so astonished by the rapidity with which he had been committed to the principle of demilitarised zones that he merely blinked acquiescence. It was only on the following day, November 24, that he returned to the charge. He claimed that the Treaty of Neuilly had placed Western Thrace in the hands of the principal Allied and Associated Powers and that he knew nothing whatsoever of any instrument under which it had been retransferred to Greece. Curzon grinned amicably. ' Ismet Pasha ', he said, ' may not like to admit that he knows anything about this Treaty, but in point

of fact His Excellency knows just as much about it as anyone else in this room.' A titter spread among the assembled delegates. Ismet blushed. On November 25 Ismet Pasha, with undiminished obstinacy, returned to the question of a plebiscite in Western Thrace. M. Nintchitch, the Jugoslav delegate, intervened to say that any such plebiscite 'might endanger the peace of the Balkans'. Lord Curzon concluded with a solemn appeal to the statesmanship of Ismet Pasha. Was he really so convinced of the value of the principle of self-determination? It seemed to Lord Curzon that this principle had 'dealt a considerable blow to the peace of the world'. Would Ismet Pasha wish it applied at Gallipoli, or at Constantinople? Let Ismet Pasha pause and consider the hard facts which had been disclosed by these opening discussions. What did these facts portend? 'Much more than the fact of Allied unity; much more than the fact of Balkan unity. What does this mean? It means a terrible risk for those who declined to recognise the value and importance of this unity. It means that those who might challenge it, and in the long run, fight against it, would be provoking a contest of a one-sided character in which they could not hope to succeed.'

In the hush which followed this dramatic peroration, Mr. Washburn Child,[1] the American observer, pro-

[1] Mr. Richard Washburn Child, a writer of magazine stories, had been selected by President Harding for the post of United States Ambassador in Rome. He was under forty years of age. He was typically American in his conviction that the whole Lausanne Conference was a plot on the part of the Old Diplomacy to deprive American company promoters of oil concessions. He was equally American in his friendliness, his desire to help, and in his ultimate good sense. He was ably assisted by Mr. Grew and Mr. Copley Amory. The American Delegation, in that they were there in the quality of 'observers', took little part in the proceedings of the Conference. They were, however, both helpful and conciliatory in the background. Mr. Child

duced a sheet of paper and read a statement in which he expounded the principle of the 'open door'. His remarks were so foolish and irrelevant that the diplomatists who witnessed this unhappy scene gazed at each other in bewildered embarrassment. Mr. Child himself appears to have observed their embarrassment but to have attributed it to other causes. The incident is recorded in his diary as follows: 'November 25. I made my statement on the Open Door. Curzon's eyes were rather anxious, and Barrère's eyes rather angry, and all the other surprised eyes were fixed upon me. When I had finished there was a somewhat mysterious pause as if the clock had stopped. I could see that my statement had given discouragement and doubt to several secret plans around the Conference table'.[1]

Yet what, by this first operation of the campaign, had Curzon actually gained? He had induced Ismet Pasha to advance, in his very first statement to the Conference, a demand which would be regarded by British and world-opinion as excessive and unjustified. It was a demand which was not regarded as essential at Angora, and which, if persisted in, would have produced a third Balkan war. He had shown the Turks, in the very first round, that Europe was not incapable of unity and determination, and he had ranged against them Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Jugoslavia, Rumania and even their former ally Bulgaria. He had established his personal authority and impressed the Conference, not merely with his unsur-

published his Lausanne diary in a book entitled *A Diplomat Looks at Europe*. As a study in American psychology his book is of great value; as a study of the Lausanne Conference it is wholly worthless.

[1] Richard Washburn Child, *A Diplomat Looks at Europe*, p. 93.

passed knowledge of detail, but with his alarming skill in debate. He had treated Ismet Pasha with courtesy, at moments with gay friendliness, and at times with solemn exhortation. He had established the principle of demilitarised zones in such a manner as to make it appear that this principle was a cardinal point in the Turkish programme. And he had placed his finger upon the weakest point in Ismet Pasha's armour, namely his inability to reply to statements or proposals without long previous consultation with the other members of his delegation.

Within a week of the opening of the Conference Curzon had thus managed to establish his personal ascendancy, and to disabuse the Turks of their conviction that it would be an easy matter to sow dissension among the Allies. His initial triumph was fully recognised by the Conference as a whole and found its echo in the foreign, and even in the British, press. Curzon was pleased by this unwonted applause. 'I think', he wrote to Lady Curzon, 'that such success as I am thought to have had arises from the fact that I know my case pretty well and that somehow or other I have the art of getting on with Orientals.' 'We are', he wrote again on November 23, 'getting on with the Conference rather better than I expected and it is with the surprise of absolute novelty that I find myself everywhere praised (after the English pressmen's view of me) for conciliation, courtesy and tact.' 'I have', he wrote a week later, 'suddenly been discovered at the age of sixty-three. I was discovered when I was Viceroy of India from 39 to 46. Then I was forgotten, traduced, buried, ignored. Now I have been dug up

and people seem to find life, and even merit, in the corpse.'[1]

In the sunshine of this new appreciation, the ice of his indignant self-pity seemed to melt. The charm of his geniality, the fine vintage of his humour, became more constant; were less exposed to spasms of irritation or to flashes of disdain. It was a relief, after all those years of neglect, after all those later years of subordination, to find himself once again autocratic, liberated, dominant. Yet as the weeks passed and a final solution came no nearer, he would be afflicted by moods of deep depression. The three windows of his sitting-room[2] looked out, between the catalpa and three conifers, upon the waters of the Lake of Geneva. Day after day those waters were hidden in a creeping fog. He would turn from such gloomy contemplation towards the room itself. A large saloon with white furniture in the Louis XV manner and maroon plush panels between the gilded mirrors. In one corner stood a high hat-stand of white wood. Against the wall were two marqueterie cabinets, their glass frontages backed by little curtains of plum-coloured silk. There were palms in the room upon high white stands, and bergère chairs, and little round tables with glass ashtrays. The duplicate doors, of which the outer was quilted on the inside, gave out upon the well of the

[1] He was gratified also by more expert tributes from home. 'I watch', wrote Sir Eyre Crowe on November 28, 'with daily delight the masterly way in which you lead and dominate the Conference.

'What a contrast with the old Peace Conference and with Genoa!'

[2] The British Delegation were housed in the older of the two wings of the Hotel Beau Rivage at Ouchy-Lausanne. Lord Curzon's sitting-room was No. 53 on the second floor. On the right was his bedroom and on the left a small private dining-room. On the same floor were the rooms of Sir Horace Rumbold and Sir William Tyrrell. The rest of the staff had their rooms and offices on the floors above.

central courtyard roofed in glass. He would descend in the tiny lift. Generally he drove to the Conference. On occasions he would go there on foot. Leaning heavily upon an ebony cane he would walk through the garden of the hotel, past the pollarded plane trees on the water front, past the cold and deserted band-stand, past the Hotel d'Angleterre where Byron had written the *Prisoner of Chillon* and enter the strange rocaille hall of the Hotel du Château where the Conference held its meetings. Crowds of journalists and detectives would make way for his passage. He would pass through the Swiss baronial lobby into the large dining-room beyond. He would take his seat in the high presidential chair. With a twitch of pain he would adjust the green baize foot-rest. He would spread his papers and his maps before him. 'Your Excellencies', he would begin, 'at our last meeting . . .'

4

Having succeeded in placing the Turks in a minority of one over the Thracian question, Curzon took as his next item on the agenda the problem of the Greek Islands in the Aegean.[1] This also was a convenient

[1] During the Balkan Wars Greece had liberated all the Aegean islands from Turkish rule except Rhodes and the other islands of the Dodecanese which were at the moment in Italian occupation. By the Treaty of London of May 30, 1913, she was confirmed in possession of these islands with the exception of Imbros and Tenedos which were restored to Turkey. By the Treaty of Sèvres Greece obtained Imbros and Tenedos also. Ismet Pasha claimed, not only the two latter islands, but also Samothrace and Lemnos, and asked that all other islands near the Turkish coast should be demilitarised and subjected to special régimes of autonomy and supervision. The Allies agreed to Turkey regaining Imbros and Tenedos and to the demilitarisation of those other islands which were a strategical menace to Turkey.

The Italians, by the Treaty of May 14, 1920, had promised to cede certain of the Dodecanese islands to Greece. On October 8, 1922, after the Greek defeat, they repudiated this Treaty and retained all the islands of the Dodecanese in their own hands.

subject. On the one hand, it was not intensely controversial, and on the other hand the Greeks, having throughout retained command of the sea, were not, on this point, in the position of a vanquished nation. Three meetings were, between November 25 and 29, devoted to the question, and it was soon evident that upon this problem at least agreement would easily be achieved.

Curzon's main object in introducing the islands at so early a stage of the Conference was, by choosing an area in which Greek supremacy was still unquestioned, to afford the Greek Delegation an opportunity to acquire confidence and prestige. This hope was frustrated by a most regrettable event.

Upon the departure of King Constantine a military Government had been established at Athens under Colonel Plastiras, the leader of the October revolution. This Government had invited M. Venizelos to represent Greece at the Conference of Lausanne. They had also arrested and brought to trial eight of King Constantine's main supporters, including the late Prime Minister, M. Gounaris, and his Foreign Minister, M. Baltazzi. Fearing for the fate of these unfortunate gentlemen—with whom in the previous months he had conducted frequent, if painful, negotiations—Lord Curzon instructed the British Minister at Athens to warn Colonel Plastiras that if they were executed Great Britain would sever diplomatic relations with Greece. It was thus with consternation, and profound personal horror, that on the evening of Tuesday, November 28, Lord Curzon received a telegram informing him that at dawn that morning MM. Gounaris and Baltazzi, together with four of their companions, had been shot by order of the Greek

Government. His first action was to recall our Minister at Athens. His second action was to send a message to M. Venizelos suggesting that it would be preferable if he were to absent himself from the meeting of the Conference which had been fixed for the next morning. His third action was to seek some means of counteracting the deplorable impression created at the Conference by these judicial murders. Dr. Nansen, who had been asked by the Powers to investigate the Greek refugee problem,[1] had just arrived in Lausanne in the hope of inducing the Greeks and the Turks to conclude some convention for the exchange of populations. Lord Curzon suggested that, at the next meeting of the Conference, he should report upon the refugee problem. He did so. In dispassionate tones he described the condition of the million refugees who had been driven or expelled from Asia Minor. Dr. Nansen's lecture proved a salutary counter-irritant. Lord Curzon felt that the atmosphere had been sufficiently relieved to justify his embarking upon the test question of the Straits.

Two further incidents at that moment occurred to disturb his equanimity. On December 3 the *Sunday Express* published extracts from the letter which M. Gounaris had addressed to Lord Curzon in the previous February (see p. 266) solemnly warning him

[1] Of the 1,600,000 Greeks resident in Asia Minor before the catastrophe only 500,000 remained. 320,000 additional Greeks had fled from Eastern Thrace. The Greek Government were therefore faced with the appalling problem of housing and supporting well over a million refugees. On the other hand there were some 450,000 Turks resident on Greek territory. Dr. Nansen suggested that these populations should be exchanged. Curzon much disliked this scheme which he regarded as inhuman. 'I detest', he said, 'having anything to do with it.' In the end the scheme, considering the difficulties, worked amazingly well. Greece in the end benefited by the absorption of these new populations.

that, without assistance, Greece could scarcely avert disaster. A few days later Lord Birkenhead in the House of Lords asserted that Curzon had omitted to communicate this vital document to the Prime Minister or to the Cabinet. 'I know', said Lord Birkenhead, 'that had the document been circulated, the first thing I should have done would have been to have asked for a Cabinet meeting in order that the most grave question of our responsibility to the Greeks might be discussed and that we might acquit ourselves of it.' For two days Curzon was exposed to severe censure by the London press. He was much disturbed. He was positive that the letter had been printed and circulated at the time. The Foreign Office were urged to make the strictest enquiry. They confirmed Curzon's own impression, and discovered the actual copy of the Gounaris letter which had been sent to Lord Birkenhead and returned by him, initialled as read. The latter tendered an ample and very generous apology. The incident was closed. Yet it left upon Lord Curzon the impression that certain politicians and newspapers were intent upon his destruction.

The second disturbing incident was a sudden attempt at blackmail on the part of the Italian Delegate, Marchese Garroni. Curzon would refer to his Italian colleague as 'the turtle', and indeed the Marchese's resemblance to a salt-water Chelonian was very pronounced. This agreeable old gentleman, who had at one time been Mayor of Genoa and Ambassador at Constantinople, visited Lord Curzon an hour before the Conference was, in the presence of the Russian delegates, to begin its examination of the problem of the Straits. He stated that unless Italy were promised

some share in the mandates over territory detached from Turkey she would feel obliged to withdraw from the Conference. Curzon completely lost his composure. Rising from his chair and casting upon the trembling Marchese a look of hatred and disdain he stalked majestically from the room. In the corridor outside he was attacked by a fit of violent trembling by which the secretary who had accompanied him was much alarmed. Restoratives were applied. Lord Curzon returned to his sitting-room, and informed Marchese Garroni that Italy was at full liberty to withdraw from the Conference should she so desire. He added significantly that Signor Orlando had withdrawn from the Paris Conference and that that Conference had continued undisturbed. The Italian delegate withdrew blinking heavy eyelids. Two days later Mussolini, on his way to London, stopped at Lausanne. He lunched with Lord and Lady Curzon. That luncheon was an enormous success. No more was heard about any Italian desire to leave the Conference.

Somewhat exhausted by these interruptions Curzon applied himself to the problem of the Straits. Since it was this problem which constituted the test of Curzon's success or failure it must be examined in some detail.

5

The problem of the Straits—the problem, that is, of the passage of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles—is as old as the Bronze Age or the *Iliad*.[1] In its more modern form it dates from the moment when, on

[1] A convenient history of the whole problem is provided by *The Question of the Straits*, by P. P. Graves.

July 28, 1696, Peter the Great captured Azov and established Russia upon an inlet of the Black Sea. From that moment onwards it became a triangular problem which can best be defined in terms of Turkish interests, British interests and Russian interests.[1]

The Turks, in that they possessed both shores of the Straits, were in the position at any moment to close the narrow corridors connecting the Black Sea with the Mediterranean, and thereby to sever all communication, commercial or other, between Southern Russia and the outer world. They claimed the right to do this whenever they might feel apprehensive regarding the safety of Constantinople. Their position was one both of great geographical power and of great geographical weakness.

The British, and to a less extent the other Western Powers, approached the problem from an economic and a strategical point of view. Economically, it was intolerable that this vital highway of commerce could be closed, as it had been closed during the Tripoli war of 1912, by unilateral action on the part of Turkey. Strategically, it was dangerous to have upon the flank of our main line of imperial communications a position possessing such unique defensive and offensive facilities. So long as Turkey herself remained neutral, or in effective control of the Straits, we were in no great danger. The Russo-Turkish war of 1878, the Turco-

[1] The following are the main historical signposts: (1) Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, 1831; Russians allowed out, no one else allowed in. (2) 1840, London Treaty confirmed the 'ancient rule of the Ottoman House' by which no warships allowed either in or out. (3) 1856, Treaty of Paris: as a result of Crimean War Russia forbidden to maintain any armed forces in the Black Sea. This was clearly unjust and was eventually abrogated by (4) Treaty of London, 1871, under which the Russians were allowed a Black Sea fleet and Turks were allowed to open the straits to warships of friendly Powers. (5) This confirmed by Treaty of Berlin, July 13, 1878.

German alliance of 1914, had taught us, however, that on neither of these two factors could any reliance be placed. The Straits, if in the hands of a strong naval Power, would become a very serious menace to our communications.

The Russians, until the Bolshevik revolution, had centred their ambitions upon ejecting the Turk from Europe and incorporating the Straits and Constantinople within the Russian Empire. Failing that, they wished to secure the right to send their Black Sea fleet into the Mediterranean, while preventing the Mediterranean fleet of any other Power from entering the Black Sea.

It was in such terms that the problem presented itself throughout the nineteenth, and during the first two decades of the twentieth, centuries. Since 1920, however, a marked alteration of focus had occurred, and from three different angles. First, the Russian centre of gravity had shifted away from Leningrad, away even from Moscow, to the black-earth regions of the south-east, to the southern grain ports, to the Donetz basin, to the oilfields of Baku. The old Russia had been almost invulnerable, in that her vital organs were distant and dispersed. The new Russia had concentrated these organs in an area which drained into the Black Sea. Thus, while regarding it as even more essential to secure unrestricted freedom of commercial passage, Russia came to approach the strategical aspects of the problem entirely from the defensive, and not from the offensive, point of view. No longer did she desire the privilege of being allowed out: she concentrated all her energies upon preventing other Powers from being allowed in. The

other Black Sea countries, in the second place, had since the war increased in economic importance. No decision could be come to without their assent. And in the third place the vital organs of Turkey had been transferred from Constantinople to Angora.

The extreme 'British' point of view was represented by the Treaty of Sèvres, by which Greece had been established on the Marmora and the control of the Straits had been vested in the hands of the Western Powers. The extreme 'Russian' point of view was represented by the Russo-Turkish Treaty of March 16, 1921 ('The Treaty of Moscow'), under which it was established that the problem of the Straits was one for 'littoral' Powers alone to decide. And the Turkish point of view (which was not extreme) was represented by Article IV of the National Pact:

> 'The security of the City of Constantinople, which is the seat of the Caliphate of Islam, the capital of the Sultanate, and the headquarters of the Ottoman Government, must be protected from every danger. Provided that this principle is maintained, whatever decision may be arrived at jointly between us and the other governments concerned with regard to the opening of the Bosphorus to the commerce and traffic of the world, is valid.'

6

Such were the elements of the problem as they appeared at 11.0 a.m. on that Monday, December 4, 1922, when the Conference of Lausanne assembled in committee to discuss the question of the Straits. The dining-room of the Hotel du Château,—with its shoddy ceiling, its ironwork chandeliers, its general *table-d'hôte* atmosphere—was heavily congested. The

political secretaries, the military and naval experts, the economic advisers, the jurisconsults, the stenographers and the attachés of every delegation had inserted themselves behind the chairs of their plenipotentiaries, determined not to miss this, the central engagement of the whole campaign. The littoral Powers had also been invited. There was poised the huge sullen frame of M. Stamboliisky, and beside him the trim, vivacious figure of M. Stancioff. There was M. Duca of the Rumanian Delegation, calm, considered, cultured; and there beside him was his colleague, M. Diamandy, flickering sensitive eyelids. Beyond them, aligned against the table, came the glum delegates of the Serbs, the Croats and the Slovenes. And there, in the left distance clustered an outraged little group upon which all eyes were turned. M. Chicherin, the plenipotentiary of the U.S.S.R.; M. Rakowski, his assistant delegate; M. Vorovski for the Ukraine; M. Mdivani, the representative of Georgia. Lord Curzon, with genial majesty, assumed the chair.

As was his custom, he first called upon the Turkish Delegation to state their views. Ismet Pasha glanced down at the paper before him and in short explosive phrases expressed his extreme satisfaction at the presence, that morning, of the representatives of Russia, Georgia and the Ukraine. He then read out, with jerky and unnecessary emphasis, the text of Article IV of the National Pact. He ceased. A silence followed.

'I must', began Lord Curzon, 'express the earnest hope that the declaration just read to us by Ismet Pasha is not the only contribution of the Turkish Delegation to this discussion. I have observed that the Turkish Delegation often begin by giving their

views with great modesty in two or three sentences which they expand in a fuller statement later on. I trust that they will do so in the present case. . . . I had thought that Ismet Pasha would favour us with his views upon such subjects as demilitarisation and would indicate how the interests of Turkey can be reconciled with the other great interests involved. Obviously, should Ismet Pasha fail to make such a contribution, the present discussion, upon which the eyes of the world are turned, will prove abortive. If Ismet Pasha is disinclined to speak, some other delegate must be called upon to do so.'

The Turkish plenipotentiary, bowing his charming little head towards his papers, indicated that he was wholly disinclined to continue the discussion. Lord Curzon then called upon the indignant M. Chicherin to address the Assembly. The Soviet representative started forward like a golden, although mangy, cocker spaniel liberated from the leash. He stood up, and then hurriedly he sat down again. Speeches at Lausanne, as at every Conference, were delivered seated. M. Chicherin glanced hurriedly at his papers. He drew a great breath. And at that a shrill falsetto startled the assembled delegates. ' La délégation de la Russie ', he screamed, ' de la Georgie, et de l'Ukraine . . . ': his voice quavered with all the woes that imperialist capitalism had brought upon the holy head of Russia. He demanded three things. First, that the Straits should be permanently open to vessels of commerce: secondly, that they should be permanently closed to vessels of war: thirdly, that Turkey should be allowed to fortify the Straits against external aggression. ' J'ai dit ', he squeaked when he had finished.

The Rumanians, the Greeks and the Bulgarians, who were then called upon, dissented from the proposals of M. Chicherin. They claimed that the Straits should be internationalised and open to the warships of every Power.

Lord Curzon then spoke as follows:

'I shall only say a few words at the present stage and should not wish to criticise, or attempt to reply to, the statements which we have heard, since these require close and careful consideration. Yet the Conference should understand the exact present position. The Turkish delegation have declined to give their views until later. The Russian delegation have put forward a complete, carefully-thought-out, scheme. . . . It seems remarkable that this programme, which provides chiefly for the defence of Turkish interests, should be put forward by Russia. While listening to this proposal, I imagined that M. Chicherin must have mistaken his rôle and assumed the *kalpak* of Ismet Pasha. M. Chicherin said that his views were those of both Russia and Turkey; *then why did not Turkey say so*? M. Chicherin is already among us in a very representative rôle. He is here on behalf of Russia, of the Ukraine and of Georgia. It now appears that he represents Turkey also. I have for a long time looked forward to meeting M. Chicherin, whom I have hitherto encountered only on paper. I am particularly gratified to meet him in this fourfold shape. I trust that the Conference will be informed later on whether M. Chicherin's views are, in fact, those of the Turkish delegation'.

Ismet Pasha, after hurried consultation with his colleagues beside and behind him, stated that of all the statements made that morning, that of Russia corresponded most closely with the Turkish point of view. Lord Curzon, without a moment's hesitation, then

took a dangerous debating risk. In solemn tones he put a question to Ismet Pasha. He asked him whether the Conference must therefore assume that the Russian and the Turkish propositions were identical.

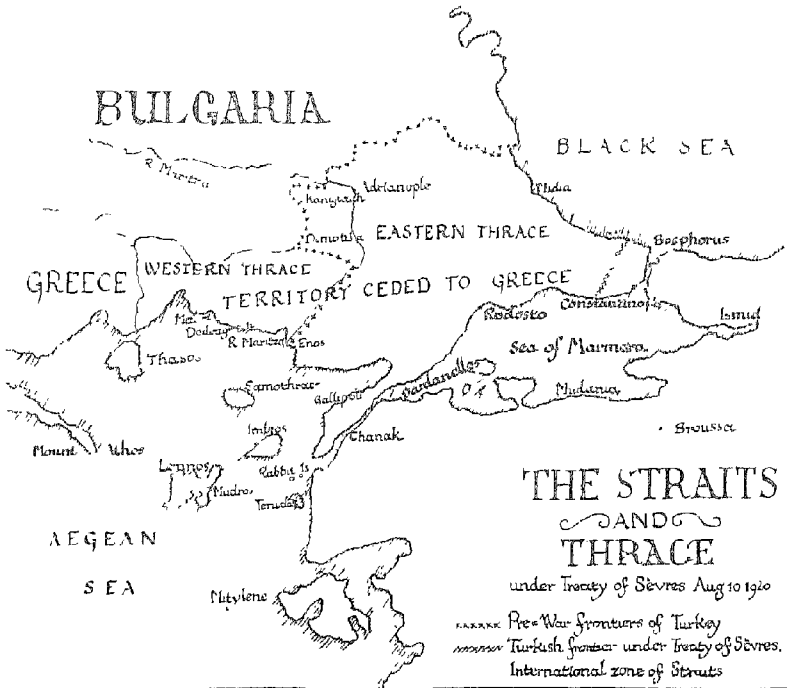
Ismet Pasha, who was slightly deaf, did not catch this remark. It was repeated to him by his colleague on the right. An expression of agony crossed the schoolboy visage of the Pasha. The moment of supreme tension had arrived. Ismet in a few halting but sensational phrases, replied that he would be willing to consider any other proposals which the Allied Powers might wish to advance. Chicherin, who possessed small control over his facial expression, peeked and peered, astonished as a cocker spaniel which has missed its prey. The united front between Turkey and Russia had been broken. The Conference adjourned.

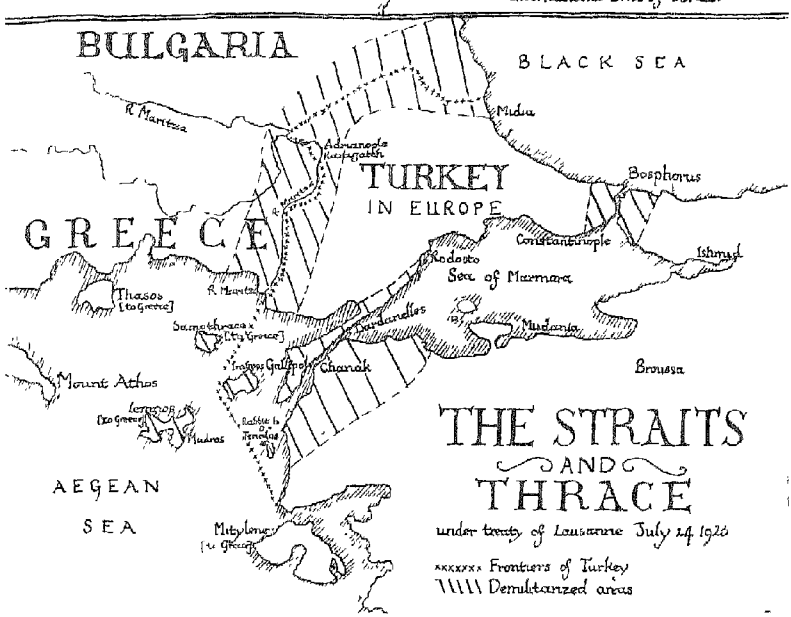
Curzon was not slow to drive home the wedge which he had thus inserted between Turkey and Russia. On the following day, Tuesday, December 6, he advanced to the attack in massed formation. He began by placing Chicherin in a false position. The Allied Powers, he said, were now prepared to allow Russia to send her Black Sea fleet through the Straits. It was Russia herself who now opposed 'this long-desired privilege'. M. Chicherin, again, had made much of the common interests of the littoral Powers, yet he had proceeded to ignore the categorically expressed wishes of Rumania and Bulgaria. The Russian proposal, if adopted, would amount to the unrestricted control of the Straits by Turkey and would turn the Black Sea into a Russian lake. 'Such', said Lord Curzon, 'if the very remarkable contribution that was made by the

Russian Delegation to the doctrine of the equal rights of nations and the peace and contentment of mankind.' With this ironical exordium he laid before the Conference the Allied proposal for a Straits Convention.[1] On the next day, Ismet Pasha produced the Turkish counter-proposal. Although not a complete acceptance of the Curzon scheme it was a patent rejection of the Chicherin scheme. Lord Curzon assured Ismet Pasha that his proposals (' which were, I feel sure, as great a surprise to the Russian Delegation as to anyone else ') would be given the most sympathetic consideration.

The question was then referred to a sub-committee for detailed consideration. This Committee prepared a draft ' Straits Convention ' which was submitted to the Conference upon December 18. M. Chicherin stated that this draft ' confirmed the impression that the scheme was primarily directed against Russia ', and added that it was a ' violation of the most elementary requirements of Turkey as regards her safety and independence '. ' I take note ', Lord Curzon answered, ' of the substantial difference between the views on this matter held by the Russian and the Turkish Delegations.' On December 20 Ismet Pasha accepted the Curzon scheme as drafted and asked only for a small garrison at Gallipoli. The final text of the Straits Convention was, to all intents and purposes, adopted

[1] The Curzon Scheme, which, except for a few minor details, was the one eventually adopted, can be summarised as follows: (1) Ships of commerce. In peace, absolute freedom of transit: in war, freedom if neutral. (2) Ships of war. In peace, freedom of transit subject to limitation of number, which should not exceed that of maximum forces of any one naval Power in Black Sea, and length of stay: in war, same except for belligerents. (3) Demilitarised zones on both shores of Straits. (4) Mixed Commission, possibly under Turkish presidency, to secure passage and supervise buoyage, lighting, etc.


BULGARIA
BLACK SEA
R. Maritza
Adrianople
Midia
EASTERN THRACE
Bosphorus
GREECE
WESTERN THRACE
TERRITORY CEDED TO GREECE
Constantinople
Rodosto
Ismid
Sea of Marmora
Thasos
R. Maritza
Enos
Samothrace
Gallipoli
Dardanelles
Mudania
Imbros
Chanak
Brousse
Mount Athos
Lemnos
Rabbit Is.
Mudros
Tenedos
AEGEAN
SEA
Mitylene
THE STRAITS
AND
THRACE
under Treaty of Sèvres Aug 10 1920
Pre-War Frontiers of Turkey
Turkish frontier under Treaty of Sèvres.
International zone of Straits


BULGARIA
BLACK SEA
R. Maritza
Midia
Adrianople
TURKEY
IN EUROPE
Bosphorus
GREECE
Constantinople
Rodosto
Ismid
Sea of Marmara
Thasos
R. Maritza
Samothrace
Dardanelles
Mudania
Imbros
Gallipoli
Chanak
Brousa
Mount Athos
Lemnos
Rabbit Is.
Mudros
Tenedos
AEGEAN
SEA
Mitylene
THE STRAITS
AND
THRACE
under treaty of Lausanne July 24 1923
Frontiers of Turkey
Demilitarized areas

at the session of February 1. M. Chicherin, in his final protest, characterised this Convention as the 'product of clandestine negotiations'. He refused to sign. Lord Curzon, having achieved his triumph, expressed regret at this decision. His final words to M. Chicherin were generous and conciliatory. The latter, as we know, was not entirely unimpressed.

The Straits Convention, as has been seen, dragged on until the very last days of the Conference. Yet the initial victory was won on December 4, 5 and 6. Lord Curzon, on that date, could feel that he had achieved certain of his major objectives. He had demonstrated the solidarity of the Allies and the minor European States. He had dispelled the illusion of the Turks that they were the conquerors of the world. He had driven a sharp wedge into the Russo-Turkish Alliance. He had in principle secured the Freedom of the Straits. He had prevented the Black Sea being turned into a Russian lake. And above all he had, by the sole force of his own personality, demonstrated that Great Britain still retained the major voice in any settlement on international affairs.

He now turned to the remaining British objective. With great caution he began to tackle the question of Mosul.

Chapter XI

LAUSANNE: THE FINAL TRIUMPH

January-February 1923

Curzon's further endeavours to widen the breach between Angora and Moscow—By taking the Minorities as a test case he forces Ismet Pasha to promise that Turkey will join the League—Period of drafting and coordination—Curzon's interviews with Lacaze, Chicherin and Stamboliisky—He goes to Paris to meet Mr. Bonar Law—The latter discouraging—Rupture of the entente with France—Curzon returns depressed and then resumes his offensive—By insisting on a draft of preliminary Treaty he makes it clear to his allies that he, and not they, have the upper hand—Mosul alone remains—By his handling of that problem he not only destroys the Turkish case but makes it impossible for Ismet Pasha to manœuvre him into a rupture on that issue—Alarm of the French delegation and attempt on the part of M. Poincaré to torpedo Curzon—Comparative failure of this attempt—Turkey accepts all our own claims and offers us a separate peace—Curzon refuses and supports France and Italy—Significance of this gesture—The final scenes—Dissolution of the Conference—Curzon assailed by ignorant opinion but praised by those who know.

I

THE question of Mosul had been placed upon the agenda as early as November 27. It was Ismet Pasha himself who suggested to Lord Curzon that this delicate matter might perhaps be postponed pending direct negotiations between the British and the Turkish experts. Curzon welcomed this suggestion. On December 7, in Ismet Pasha's sitting-room at the Lausanne Palace, the first conversations were opened. The Turks claimed the whole vilayet of Mosul. The British stated that on such a basis no further nego-

tiations were possible. There followed an exchange of written memoranda on December 14, 23 and 26. It was not till January 23 that the battle was openly joined. Before, therefore, examining the Mosul question—its alarming implications and its triumphant results—it will be preferable to record Curzon's conduct of the Conference during those intervening weeks of December and January.

Having, on December 8, pierced the Russo-Turkish line upon the Straits question, Curzon devoted three sittings of the Conference to the problem of minorities. Here again he scored a signal victory and one which still further widened the breach between Turkey and Russia. That, for the moment, was his essential object. He knew that it would be quite impossible to induce the new Turkey to subject herself to any form of servitude or supervision in regard to the Armenians, the Chaldeans, or the other Christian and Moslem minorities which would still remain within the frontiers of the Turkish State. He also knew that on this matter the Turkish Delegation were acutely conscious that the judgment of the world was against them, and he hoped to use this uneasiness on the part of Ismet Pasha to induce Turkey to enter the League of Nations. If only he could secure such adhesion, the breach between Moscow and Angora would become irreparable. It was an article of faith with the U.S.S.R. to forbid her satellites and associates to have any dealings with the 'organised impotence of Geneva which serves only to further the designs of the capitalist imperialist Powers'. Were Curzon to succeed in eliciting from Ismet Pasha a promise that Turkey would enter the League, he would have demonstrated to the whole

world that the Russo-Turkish Alliance had in fact been broken.

On December 12 Lord Curzon opened the discussion by explaining the past history and present position of these minorities. He drew attention to the fact that, even if the Treaty were concluded, there would remain in Constantinople some 350,000 Greeks. In Asia Minor there were the Assyrian Christians, a deserving but ill-used race, and, he might add, the Kurds. The Armenian population of Asia Minor, he remarked significantly, which had once numbered some three million, were now estimated at no more than 130,000. Would Ismet Pasha accord to these wretched relicts 'the place of retreat and concentration which they desire'?[1]

Ismet Pasha replied to this request by reading a paper which went back to the days of Mahomet the Conqueror, and which quoted Voltaire, Michelet, Seignobos, Lavisse and even Mr. Oscar Browning to prove that Turkey had always behaved with the greatest kindliness towards her minorities and that it was the Great Powers who had encouraged those minorities to conduct themselves in a spirit of the blackest ingratitude. 'Those Armenians', he said, 'who remain

[1] The Armenians of Asia Minor had been decimated by the massacres of 1895-1897 and the even more extensive extermination carried out during the war. One of the most loudly advertised of our war aims had been to provide these people, or what remained of them, with a 'National Home'. It was for long hoped that an independent Armenia would be created under the American mandate, and in the Treaty of Sèvres such a national home was in fact created on paper within frontiers to be decided by President Wilson. In Russian Armenia a 'tashnakist' or menshevik Republic had in fact been created, but it was quickly suppressed by the Soviet and its territory partitioned between Russia and Turkey. The Allies then hoped to create a home for the Armenians in Cilicia under French supervision, but this hope was frustrated by M. Franklin-Bouillon. In the end the Allied Powers completely abandoned Armenia and the Armenians.

in Turkey must already have recognised the unavoidable necessity of living as good citizens'; and he concluded with the contention that the best guarantees for the minorities would be 'those supplied by the laws of the country and the liberal policy which Turkey has always practised with regard to those communities whose members have not deviated from their duties as Turkish citizens'. Curzon implored Ismet Pasha to approach this vital matter in a spirit of humanity. There was no question of treating Turkey as an inferior or of imposing upon her servitudes and restrictions which had not been accepted by European countries, as members of the League of Nations. If Turkey were to join the League, then these minority provisions would be on exactly the same basis as those accepted by other countries. If she still refused to join the League, then of course the matter would be more complicated. 'The eyes of the world', he said, 'are on Armenia and Turkey, and the world will not be content that these wretched people should be left without any protection at the mercy of whatever the Turkish Government might be pleased to do.' He went on to hint that a deplorable impression would be created if it were on such a question that the Conference dissolved. 'When we go away', he said, '—and we may go quicker than you think—the whole world will look at what we have been saying and doing here during the last two days. . . . This cannot go on indefinitely; Europe has other things to do; we all have other things to do. The minorities problem excites more attention throughout the world than anything else, and by the manner in which it is solved, will this Conference be judged. If the Turks adopt an un-

reasonable attitude upon this; if we break down upon this; if we have to go away after this; will there be a single voice lifted up for the Turkish Delegation in the whole world?'

Ismet Pasha was obviously perturbed by this appeal from the *salle-à-manger* of the Hotel du Château to an inarticulate, but clearly sensitive, world beyond. He asked for an adjournment. If a rupture had to come, then let it come over some question, such as Mosul, in which world-opinion would be on Turkey's side. In any case it was too early, as yet, to speak of rupture. On the next morning, December 14, Ismet began his statement by promising that Turkey would join the League of Nations so soon as peace was signed. A sigh of relieved amazement passed through the Conference. A sub-committee on minorities was at once constituted under the very able direction of Signor Montagna, the second Italian delegate. Some few—some very few—safeguards were secured for the minorities. But Curzon, by his expert tactics, had driven a second wedge into the rift between Angora and Moscow. Turkey had promised, eventually, to join the League.

2

The Conference dragged onwards. By December 20, when Ismet Pasha had finally accepted in principle the draft Straits Convention, a mass of detailed agreement had been accumulated by the several sub-committees of the Conference in respect, not only of the main territorial and military issues, but also of the financial, commercial and capitulations clauses. Between December 20 and January 23 only two meetings

of the main Conference were held. The work was being done in sub-committee and by personal interviews between the main plenitpotentiaries. Lord Curzon found these interviews extremely exhausting. In a diary kept at the time by a member of his staff the following entry occurs for December 22 :

> 'Curzon in a curious mood this morning. Almost hysterical. He had had a conversation last night with Ismet, Barrère and Garroni. The two latter toady Ismet, bawling "Excellence" at him at every sentence, shouting "ami et cher collègue". This makes Curzon sick with disgust. It was all to begin again at 11.0 : he groaned aloud at the prospect. He rose from his chair and did an imitation of Garroni addressing Ismet Pasha, fondling him, stroking him, cooing endearments as loud as he could. Curzon is a good mimic. He was half laughing the whole time at his own imitation of Garroni, and half crying at the thought that in a few minutes it would all begin again. An odd man. Like Sarah Bernhardt in *Phèdre*, he was about it all. In the middle of all this Ismet and the rest arrive. Ismet as usual goes back upon all he had conceded yesterday. Curzon leans back in his chair with a gesture of exhausted despair. Barrère continues the conversation. Lunch alone with Curzon after. He quickly recovers. He says the Greeks must have Imbros since it is the only place in the world where they use the Attic optative. I tell him that in Rumania they use the Latin genitive plural. This cheers him enormously. He says that if he were left alone with Ismet he could get on with him. He likes the little man as we all do. But Garroni ! ! !—and then Curzon began to mimic again and recovered his spirits completely.'

Nor were these the only interviews. Lord Curzon, during the Lausanne Conference, was immensely accessible. Dr. Nansen would appear after breakfast,

accompanied by Mr. Philip Baker, and expound the horrors of the Greek refugee problem. Mr. Harold Spender would appear, after luncheon, and abuse Great Britain for her undoubted, but none the less unmentionable, betrayal of Greece. Agha Petros would be admitted before dinner and remind Lord Curzon of all the promises which we had made to the Assyrians. The Iraqi Delegate—an amiable man—would intrude while Curzon was preparing for a long night of intensive labour and speak with charm, but not with brevity, of the obligations which we had assumed in Mesopotamia. Mr. Oliver Baldwin, who attached himself to the Armenian Delegation, would send in embittered messages on the subject of British 'good-faith'. Mr. Washburn Child would intrude 'childishly' (Lord Curzon made all too frequent use of that particular pun) with some bright and uplifting idea. M. Venizelos would appear with sad prognostications regarding the future of the Orthodox Patriarch at Constantinople. M. Duca would come with offers of caviare. Mr. Nintchitch would suggest some arrangement about Salonica. Baron Hayashi would drop in to sympathise regarding the climate, in January, of the Lake of Geneva. And the journalists, beyond the padded door of his sitting-room, were amiably but very numerously upon the alert.

Lord Curzon was not always able to cope with these interruptions in a spirit of philosophic detachment. There was an occasion when the French Delegation, headed by the superb Barrère, came in full force to discuss the Freedom of the Straits. Admiral Lacaze was designated to expound the naval aspects of the problem. In spite of his age, and the fact that he had once

been Minister of Marine, the Admiral was so intimidated by Lord Curzon's imperturbable scrutiny that he reverted to the conventions and gestures of his early *lycée*. Being anxious to speak, he raised his hand and snapped his fingers, as is the habit in a French private school. Lord Curzon observed this snapping process with cold scrutiny: he ignored it: the Admiral snapped again, exclaiming the while, 'Je demande la parole'. Curzon gazed at him with disdain. He addressed the Admiral in a perfect Oxford accent. 'Je vous prie', he said, 'de vous taire.' Admiral Lacaze winced at this discouraging remark and bolted from the room. Apologies were thereafter demanded. Sir Roger Keyes acted as mediator. He approached Lord Curzon and endeavoured to explain: he hesitated before that basilisk eye: he stopped: 'I am afraid', he said, 'that I have lost the thread of my discourse'. Lord Curzon inclined his head majestically. Sir Roger Keyes withdrew.

This incident is not without significance. It is the sort of incident which occurred again and again. If Curzon is to be understood at all, it must be pushed to its final conclusion. That conclusion was as follows. Sir Roger Keyes, having failed to extract an apology from Lord Curzon, appealed to one of the Foreign Office officials whom he believed to possess a more confident attitude towards that intricate personality. The official, choosing a favourable moment, urged Lord Curzon to offer an apology to Admiral Lacaze. The Secretary of State was at first outraged by such impertinence. 'You ask me', he said, 'to believe that Keyes, having, in circumstances of marked peril—and in inevitable danger to his life—confronted the massed

batteries of the German Empire, is unable to formulate, in his own person, what I am quite prepared to suppose is a reasonable request?' The official replied that this was, in fact, the demand which he wished to impose upon Lord Curzon's powers of imagination. 'Never!' Curzon exclaimed, '*never*, shall I apologise to that insufferable rabbit.' The rabbit in question was not Sir Roger Keyes but Admiral Lacaze. The Foreign Office official decided to turn on the *vox humana*. He explained how painful it was for those of Lord Curzon's staff who admired him (Curzon at this was moved) to face the criticisms of those (Curzon at this was doubly moved) who regarded him as a *hard* man. Those who really knew him realised that he was a generous man, although one who loved rows. Other men, less generous than he, detested rows. It would be so easy for Curzon—such a little thing—a thing so welcome to those who were fond of him. . . .

There was no more to be said. Already Lord Curzon's hand had reached towards the writing-pad. In a few seconds a letter of apology had been written such as would have melted a heart of stone.

The official read, and rapidly pocketed, the letter. He expressed his thanks. 'Yes', said Lord Curzon, 'it is a very odd thing. I am not, perhaps, a profoundly religious man, yet I say my prayers. Every morning, among my other prayers, when I kneel down, I formulate the following phrase: "Please God, may I not be rude or unkind during the course of this coming day to any man or woman". In the evening when I retire to bed, I go back upon my day and examine whether that prayer has been vouchsafed.

Would you believe it, my dear fellow—it is seldom vouchsafed! I always find that I have been very rude, and very often rude, during the day, to many men—and alas, even to a few women! It is very strange!' He took a gulp at his brandy and soda. 'Very strange', he repeated, 'indeed.'

Another interview was that granted to M. Chicherin. Curzon delighted in meeting his adversaries in person. M. Chicherin, as ever, was tremulous, excessive and vague. Curzon was entranced by this interview. Chicherin informed the correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* that he had been ill-received. This was untrue. Curzon had received him with exuberant good humour. Chicherin had interpreted this humour as a wish to humiliate. Which it assuredly was not.

M. Stamboliisky, the peasant Prime Minister of Bulgaria, was also granted an audience. He came in the company of M. and Mlle. Stancioff. He asked for an outlet for Bulgaria upon the Aegean. Curzon was attracted towards this solid, somewhat helpless, monolith. He always felt at his ease with entirely self-made people. The only people with whom he could not establish relations of amity were those who belonged to what he called (regrettably perhaps) the 'upper middle class'. This was an unfortunate inhibition, since those were the very people with whom it would have been most advantageous for him to get on. With M. Stamboliisky, however, he at once reached those easy relations which he would have established with the second gamekeeper at Kedleston. He was obliged to refuse M. Stamboliisky any territorial access to the Aegean but he promised him all

manner of economic guarantees. He accompanied the Bulgarian Prime Minister as far as the lift. On parting, he placed his arm upon that wide agrarian shoulder and patted that sturdy proletarian back. M. Stancioff, at the conclusion of the interview, came to inform an old friend in the British Delegation of the results. The Aegean outlet, he explained, had not been over well received. Yet Lord Curzon had, after all, patted Stamboliisky on the back. 'J'ai expliqué', he added, 'au Président du Conseil que ce geste-là était rare pour un lord.'

On the afternoon of Sunday, December 31, Lord Curzon paid a hurried visit to Paris for the purpose of consultation with Mr. Bonar Law, who, after the comparative failure of the London Reparation Conference of December 9-11, had decided, by personal consultation, to dissuade M. Poincaré from occupying the Ruhr. The Prime Minister was not encouraging. Faced as he was by the impending rupture of the Franco-British alliance, he desired that the Turkish situation should be liquidated upon any terms. Curzon returned to Lausanne on the evening of Tuesday, January 2. He was met at the station by two members of his staff. He emerged from his sleeping-car a suffering and disheartened man. There was a long silence as his motor threaded its way through the tram lines of Lausanne down to the comparative quiet of the Ouchy littoral. 'Well', remarked one of Curzon's secretaries with unseasonable levity, 'it is obvious that Mr. Bonar Law was not very encouraging.' 'The feet', Curzon answered, 'of the Prime Minister were glacial.' He sighed deeply. 'Positively glacial', he repeated.

'I found Bonar Law', he wrote to Lady Curzon, 'longing to clear out of Mosul, the Straits, Constantinople; willing to give up everything and anything rather than have a row; astonished at the responsibility I have assumed at Lausanne and prepared for me to back down everywhere.'

It was under the cloud of such discouragement that he resumed his lonely task.

3

On January 4, 1923, the Paris Conference on Reparation collapsed. On January 11 French troops occupied the Ruhr. The united front which Curzon had striven so industriously to foster and maintain was severely damaged. M. Barrère, pleading ill-health, returned to Rome. Curzon felt that the whole Conference was dislocating around him. For a moment he despaired. It was pointed out to him that by that date almost all the British desiderata had been secured. There remained only Mosul. The Turks were fully aware, owing to the unceasing assistance afforded them by the *Daily Express* and other British journals, that Curzon would obtain no support in London upon this unpopular question. They were also aware that he would, for this and other reasons, be unwilling, if a rupture had to come, that it should occur over a purely Anglo-Turkish dispute. There was the danger that if, at this moment, Curzon lost confidence or control, he might suddenly be manœuvred into a position in which all his early victories would have to be sacrificed in order to avoid a final defeat. Galvanised by these exhortations, Curzon recovered from the pessimism induced in him by Mr. Bonar Law. His combative

instincts were aroused. Once again he ordered a general offensive. His spirits returned.

January 11, 1923, the day on which the French troops entered the Ruhr, was Curzon's sixty-fourth birthday. Upon the settee in his sitting-room he spread out the presents he had received. There was a book from Mr. Washburn Child and two large boxes of crystallised fruit from Mrs. Child and Mrs. Grew. There were other presents from members of his staff. Curzon, munching a huge crystallised orange, introduced this collection with boyish pleasure to all his visitors. His staff, being sophisticated, displayed in their manner a slight chill of disapproval. They found this infantilism ungainly. They resented the fact that the papers returned to them during the next days by Lord Curzon contained flakes of sugared pineapple and other adhesive substances. But Curzon, sensitive as he was to any exhibition of friendly attention, felt fortified. That strong spring of boyishness which was the fountain of his charm welled up refreshed. It gave him an actual renewal of spiritual energy. It was with full Curzon zest that he embarked upon his offensive.

This offensive, in its first stage, took the comparatively mild form of a 'Coordination Committee'. By then the several sub-committees were flooding the jurists with material to be drafted in proper legal form. It was necessary that somebody should be charged with the task of filtering all this inchoate material, and of securing that there should be no overlapping and no omissions. Curzon instructed the British representative on this Coordination Committee to induce his colleagues to accept certain 'Heads of Agreement'

which could serve as the draft of a preliminary treaty and could be offered to the Turks as a definite document for their acceptance or rejection. This procedure produced important results. On the one hand, the Turks, who were made aware of what was impending, were rendered uneasy. On the other hand, when it came to put on paper the points which had already been agreed to and those which still were in dispute, the fact emerged that the peculiarly British *desiderata* (or in general terms those subjects which had been dealt with by the Conference under Curzon's chairmanship) had all but been accorded, whereas the financial, economic and capitulatory clauses, in which the French and Italians were more interested even than ourselves, were still subject to acute controversy. Our Allies were thus faced with the appalling realisation that, whereas they had come to Lausanne confident that Turkey regarded Great Britain as her enemy and France and Italy as her friends, it was the former who had managed to obtain her desires and the latter who had failed completely to win any concessions from the Turks. It thus became clear that it was less a question of France and Italy deserting Great Britain, than one of Curzon being tempted to abandon his Allies. Only Mosul remained. If the British were to come to a separate agreement with the Turks in regard to this dispute, then the French would indeed find themselves in a dangerous position. Curzon was well aware of this their apprehension. On the morning of January 23 he staged, with expert gusto, a formal conference on the subject of Mosul.

4

The problem of Mosul was, at the time, one of great importance and appalling difficulty. Its importance was based upon two considerations. On the one hand, unless Great Britain were able in this area to impose her wishes upon Turkey, our prestige would suffer, not in Iraq only, but throughout the Middle East. On the other hand, the Mosul question was the only outstanding controversy between Turkey and Great Britain in which we stood completely alone. The interests of no other Power were involved; we could look for no extraneous support; the conflict, as a conflict, was clean-cut to the point of nudity.

The difficulties with which Curzon was faced arose from a most unfortunate combination of local, geographical, ethnical, strategical, economic, political and personal complexities. It is necessary to define these complexities.

Geographically, the issue centred upon the frontier to be drawn between what may roughly be called the ancient kingdom of Nineveh, and the mandated territory of Iraq or Mesopotamia. Should the frontier between Turkey and Mesopotamia follow the southern boundary of the vilayet of Mosul—along the Dialah and the Gebel Hamrin? Should it coincide with the northern administrative boundary? Or should it be drawn as a compromise line somewhere between the two? The population of the district was not one which offered any secure data for self-determination. It was not only mixed, but most undetermined. In the south-western zone there were the Badawi Arabs. In the remaining portions there were the Kurds, who

were not in the least plebiscite-conscious and who included Turkoman and Yezidi minorities. Then there were the Nestorian Christians (in whom the Archbishops of York and Canterbury took a deep and embarrassing interest) as well as the Chaldeans (to whom our authorities in Iraq had during the war incurred obligations). And finally there were the Turks who were congregated, not in the area closest to the Turkish frontier, but in the area which was separated from that frontier by settlement of non-Turkish peoples. Ethnically there was no obvious solution offered. Economically, also, the trade communications of the district flowed away from Turkey and towards Iraq, Syria and Persia. Apart from this, we had involved ourselves in inextricable complications arising out of local politics. At the time of the armistice of Mudros (October 30, 1918) our troops had occupied most of the vilayet of Mosul but had not occupied the town of that name or the whole area which we were now claiming. That area had been subsequently occupied as a 'point of strategical importance'. We could not, with perfect confidence, claim our frontier by right of military conquest alone. Moreover we had encouraged the Assyrians to rise against the Turks and were under a moral obligation not to replace their home pasturages within the Ottoman boundary. Already some 35,000 Nestorian Christians had taken refuge in Iraq. The Kurds, again, who, when we wanted them to feel race-conscious, had refused to manifest any such desire, had suddenly awoken to the Fourteen Points in 1922—a most belated moment. At the very crisis of the Lausanne Conference the Kurds, under Sheikh Mahmoud, were displaying a desire to achieve autonomy, not

under the aegis of a mandated Mesopotamia, but under the aegis of Mustapha Kemal. Such factors rendered the local situation inconvenient to a degree. Nor were these Curzon's only preoccupations.

In the first place, there was the question of oil. On June 27, 1914, the very day before the Sarajevo murder, the 'Turkish Petroleum Company' had been instituted and had obtained exclusive rights over the oil deposits in the vilayets of Baghdad and Mosul. Seventy-five per cent. of the shares in this company were held by British interests, and the remaining 25 per cent. were held by German interests. The Mosul vilayet had, under the Sykes-Picot agreement, been placed within the French zone, but the French Government had agreed, in so far as British interests were concerned, to recognise the above concession. In 1918 Mr. Lloyd George had induced M. Clemenceau to agree to surrender to Great Britain the vilayet of Mosul provided that the French obtained a share, which should not be less than the former German share, in these oil deposits. This latter promise was subsequently embodied in the Berenger-Long agreement of April 18, 1919, and in the Berthelot-Cadman agreement of April 24, 1920. In August of that year the United States had objected to these agreements on the ground that they were not consonant with the principle of the 'open door'. These facts have been recorded only for the purpose of indicating the intricacy of the problem which Curzon had to face.

There was, however, a second consideration of even greater difficulty. The Prime Minister and the Cabinet, being sensitive on oil questions, were terrified lest Curzon, by taking a firm line on this matter, might

place them in a disagreeable position. Mr. Bonar Law was explicit. He feared that Turkey might manœuvre us into a rupture upon this question of Mosul. 'This', he wrote, 'would be the most unfortunate thing which could happen in every way, since half of our people, and the whole of the world, would say that we had refused peace for the sake of oil. . . . If I made up my mind that we were free to leave, I would certainly not be responsible for continuing to hold the mandate.' 'It is perhaps well', he wrote to Curzon again on January 8, 'that I should again repeat that there are two things which seem to me vital. The first is that we should not go to war for the sake of Mosul; and second, that if the French, as we know to be the case, will not join us, we shall not by ourselves fight the Turks to enforce what is left of the Treaty of Sèvres. I feel so strongly on both these points that, unless something quite unforeseen should change my view, I would not accept responsibility for any other policy.'

Strange as it may seem, these defeatist opinions of the Prime Minister were echoed, although in less parliamentary form, by the *Daily Express*. 'Mosul', they wrote, 'is not worth the bones of one single British soldier. Our interests in Mosul are non-existent.' A few days later the *Daily Express* was even more emphatic. Under the streaming headlines of 'No war to defend Mosul! Out of Mesopotamia! Bag and baggage the only policy!' they wrote as follows: 'The British people ought to fix their eyes upon the war-cloud in Mesopotamia. They ought to make it plain that they are not going to war to defend Mosul against the Turks. Our duty is to hand over Mosul to the League of Nations'.

It seems almost incredible that in the face of such anti-British propaganda, in the face of such discouragement on the part of Mr. Bonar Law, in the face of such local complexity, Lord Curzon should none the less have saved Mosul for Iraq. The methods by which he attained this object were characteristic of his unequalled diplomatic skill.

5

In the Notes which had been exchanged with Ismet Pasha in December Lord Curzon had not merely stated the British case, and the arguments upon which it was based, but had assumed an attitude which would have horrified the *Daily Express* and which did, in fact, elicit from Mr. Bonar Law the alarmist letters which have above been quoted. 'The British Government', Curzon had asserted in his final Note of December 26, 'defeated the Turkish forces and expelled them from the entire area of Iraq and far beyond.' 'In these circumstances', he concluded, 'I should merely be deceiving Your Excellency if I led you to think that any prolongation of the controversy could make any difference whatever to the attitude which I have felt it my duty to assume.'

Ismet Pasha was in a difficult position. On the one hand he respected, and feared, Lord Curzon and was personally desirous of agreement. On the other hand, he was assured by his representative in London that British opinion was not behind their Foreign Secretary and that the Cabinet and Prime Minister were in a panic at the thought that the British Empire might be faced by some sharp demand on the part of the Angora Assembly. The first article of the National Pact had

provided that, although the wholly Arab countries would be allowed self-determination, yet all other territories in which there was an 'Ottoman' majority must form 'an indissoluble part of the Turkish State'. Ismet knew all too well that the expression 'Ottoman' would be interpreted by the Grand National Assembly as including the Kurds. He therefore refused, until the very last moment, to meet Great Britain upon the subject of Mosul. Lord Curzon, in spite of the faint but frequent bleatings which reached him from Mr. Bonar Law, also refused to surrender. The public discussion of the controversy therefore led to no immediate agreement. But it led to one highly important result. It convinced all those present that after Curzon's masterly handling of the discussion it would be difficult, if not impossible, for Ismet Pasha to force a rupture on the question of Mosul.

The whole of Tuesday, January 23, was devoted to an examination, in full conference, of the Mosul problem. The proceedings were opened at 11.0 a.m. with a few words by Lord Curzon regretting that direct negotiation had produced no result and calling upon the Turkish Delegation to explain their case to the assembly and to the world.

Ismet Pasha, in his stumbling but emphatic manner, then read from a carefully prepared memorandum in which at great length he summoned history, ethnography, geography and economics to his aid. It was evident that the Turkish Delegation had been at pains to prepare a document as scientific and as detailed as anything which Curzon might produce. Yet Ismet Pasha, for all his charm, was not a master of elocution;

he was even worse when it came to reading aloud; after three-quarters of an hour of his monotonous recitation the assembled delegates began to shuffle in their seats.

When Ismet Pasha had finished there was an expectant pause. In quiet tones Curzon embarked upon what was perhaps the most brilliant, the most erudite, the most lucid exposition which even he had ever achieved. With unemphatic logic he demolished one by one the arguments which Ismet Pasha had advanced. The whole resources of his unequalled knowledge, the whole value of his unexampled experience, the vigour of his superb memory, his supreme mastery of lucid diction, the perfect symmetry of his every phrase, combined with the visual effect of his Olympian presence, rendered his performance one which none of those present (and they were men who had been accustomed to oratory in every form) had ever seen equalled or would ever see surpassed. Even Mr. Washburn Child, who was all too apt to resent Lord Curzon's effortless superiority, was stirred. He records in his diary that the contrast between Ismet Pasha's statement and Lord Curzon's reply was as that 'between a Greek temple and a dish of scrambled eggs'.

Lord Curzon began his statement by reminding the Turkish Delegation that we had occupied Mosul by right of conquest during the Great War. 'That', he said, 'was a war which ended in the defeat of the Turkish armies and the expulsion of the Turkish Government from the country. . . . Will Ismet Pasha allow me to call his attention to the entirely novel and unprecedented character of his request? It will not be disputed that in Asia the Allied Powers, represented

in this case by the British Government and the British armies, won the war? It will not be disputed that they wrested Mesopotamia from Turkey or that they have administered the whole of that country for more than four years. . . . Yet the Turkish Delegation come here and seriously contend that the British Government should hand back a considerable portion of the area which it thus conquered and which it has since administered, merely because the Turkish Parliament in Constantinople in February 1920 came to certain resolutions which have been called the National Pact and which have since been confirmed by the Grand National Assembly at Angora. I venture to say that such an argument has never before been addressed to a nation or Government which has been victorious in battle. . . . Ismet Pasha said that it was contrary to the modern spirit to conquer anybody. Is that the spirit in which the Turkish Government are going, in future, to conduct their affairs? I do not know. But I *do* know that it is not the spirit in which they have conducted these discussions in the last few weeks. Let that pass. I will now take the various considerations which Ismet Pasha has been good enough to place before us. . . .'

After this firm and triumphant exordium Curzon embarked upon the demolition of the Turkish case. He showed that the statistics upon which Ismet Pasha had based his ethnical arguments were inaccurate and out of date. Without a glance at his notes, he reeled off fact after fact by which he proved the Turkish arguments to be dishonest, ignorant or absurd. At moments he would allow himself a flight of rhetoric, at other moments he would concentrate upon erudite

details, and at times he would relapse into a purely conversational tone and turn upon Ismet Pasha the whole width of his good-humoured grin. The following passages may be taken as typical of these transitions:

'Now I will turn to the Turkish population, upon which it is natural that Ismet Pasha should base his case. The Turkish population are only one-twelfth of the entire population of the vilayet. They are mainly situated in the towns of Erbil, Alteunkeupreui, Kirkuk and Kifri. They are not Osmanli Turks at all. They are descendants of a Turanian invasion from Central Asia which came to the country long before either the Seljuk or the Ottoman invasions took place. They speak a Turkish dialect of their own. It is not the dialect of Angora; it is not the dialect of Constantinople. There exist also a certain number of the families of Turkish officers and officials who have . . .'

Take this also as a specimen of his conversational style:

'I will next take the case of the Kurds, of whom I remarked that there are 455,000 out of a total population of 750,000 to 800,000. It was reserved for the Turkish delegation to discover for the first time in history that the Kurds were Turks. Nobody has ever found it out before. . . . It is a matter of general agreement that the Kurds are of Iranian race. They speak an Iranian language; their features are entirely different from those of the Turks, and so are their customs and their relations with women. I have been in the Kurdish country myself. I have stayed with the Kurds, and though I do not pretend to be an authority I would undertake to pick out a Kurd from a Turk any day of the week. Unless I were blind, I could not confuse the two.'

Or this as the employment of his faculty for debate:

'On the point of strategy Ismet Pasha said very little, and perhaps wisely: he confined himself to saying that if the Mosul vilayet were returned to Turkey the Turkish Government might be relied upon to have no hostile intentions. Let us see what that means. Let us suppose that I yielded to Ismet Pasha and said he could have back the Mosul vilayet. It is a rich country. Mosul would be an excellent place for an army corps to be stationed, and no doubt would make a first-class military centre. The southern frontier is only 60 miles from Baghdad. Ismet Pasha has suggested that the Jebel Hamrin would make a good defensive boundary. But it is well known that this is not a great range of mountains, but merely a series of rolling downs. Is it not obvious that a Turkish army placed at Mosul would have Baghdad at its mercy, and could cut off the wheat supply almost at a moment's notice? It could practically reduce Baghdad to starvation. Moreover it could cut the line which runs to Khanikin, one of the main trade routes of the Eastern world. Thus it could make the Arab kingdom well-nigh impossible. Only a few weeks ago, when dealing with Thrace and Constantinople, it was proposed to put the Thracian frontier at 80 miles of Constantinople. The Turkish delegation then said that it was quite impossible for them to accept so great a danger to their country and capital. Yet they come here to argue there would be no danger to Iraq to have the frontier brought down to 60 miles of the capital. I do not dispute for a moment the present very genuinely friendly intentions of the Turkish delegation, but it only needs a slight study of history to know that a powerful military nation like the Turks, if they were allowed to occupy the position they now claim, would probably bring about the extinction of the Arab kingdom at no distant date.'

For one hour and a half did Lord Curzon speak unhesitatingly upon such lines. When he had finished

the Turkish case lay torn and tattered at his feet. He concluded by saying that the British Government were prepared to submit the dispute to arbitration. They would be prepared to pledge themselves to accept any solution which the League of Nations might recommend. Were the Turkish Delegation also prepared to submit to such impartial arbitration?

Ismet Pasha stated that he would prefer to reserve his reply until the second meeting, which was therefore fixed for 6.0 p.m. that very day. He then stated that Turkey would not accept the arbitration of the League but would consent to a plebiscite. Lord Curzon contended that the fixation of a frontier was of all questions 'the least suitable for decision by a plebiscite':

> 'I venture', he said, 'to think that I have had far more experience of plebiscites than Ismet Pasha. Since the war I have had a great deal to do with plebiscites concerning frontiers and I am determined never to deal with another. The plebiscite is a fatal and pernicious system of endeavouring to settle a frontier; I will tell the Conference why. First, you have to decide who are to vote, what are to be their ages, qualifications and length of residence in the country. As Ismet Pasha has said, many of the people in the vilayet of Mosul are nomads, constantly going to and fro between the hills and the plains, and sometimes migrating into Persia. Which of all these people are to vote and on what grounds are they to be selected? Secondly, you have to decide who is to keep order when the voting is taking place. Where is the army to come from to keep peace in Kurdistan? It cannot be Turkish or British, as those two countries are interested parties. Is there any gentleman in this room who is willing to offer an army to keep the peace during the Mosul plebiscite? He will be a great fool if he does.'

Lord Curzon then drew a lurid picture of two European plebiscites, that of Teschen and Upper Silesia. He then continued:

'Let us imagine a plebiscite in Kurdistan. What would happen? The population is always moving. The majority is illiterate and will not know how to vote. . . . The Kurds would doubtless vote for an independent Kurdistan; the Arabs for an Arab state; the Turks for Turkish nationality; and the Christians for anything which will keep them away from the Turks. How can you define frontiers under such conditions? The result would be inextricable confusion and the Great Powers would hold themselves up to ridicule. Plebiscites are only good for a unified, not a mixed population. For a single, not for a confused, issue.'

There could be no reply to such argumentation. It seemed that a complete deadlock had been reached. The Turkish Delegation had categorically refused League arbitration, and Curzon had demonstrated that their alternative offer of a plebiscite was not a practical proposition. It was the general impression that the meeting would now be adjourned. Lord Curzon, whose zest for controversy had by now been fully aroused, was not however prepared to content himself with the mere destruction of Ismet's arguments. He determined, at great risk, to push his advantage further. He did so. After appealing to the Turkish Delegation to reconsider their refusal to submit the matter to the arbitration of the League he proceeded to indicate to them the consequences of that refusal. In solemn tones, and to the astonishment of those present, he read out the terms of Article 11 of the Covenant. 'Any war', he read, 'or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the members of

the League or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the whole League, and the League shall take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations.' Having read through the whole article he paused in silence. 'If', he continued, 'the Turkish Delegation refuse my proposal I shall act upon that article. I have stated on behalf of my Government the action which I shall be compelled to take, and I shall take it without delay.'

This, for the purposes of the first Lausanne Conference, was the end of the Mosul dispute. The Turkish position had been pierced, shattered, and turned. There was henceforward no danger of Ismet Pasha being able to treat Mosul as a purely British question and thereby to throw upon Lord Curzon the onus of causing a rupture of the Conference of Lausanne. Curzon had triumphed along the whole line.[1]

6

On the following day, that is on Wednesday, January 24, Lord Curzon summoned to his room the French and Italian Delegates. He pointed out to them

[1] In the end Curzon agreed to postpone his appeal to the League pending further direct negotiation with the Turkish Government. In May 1924 a Conference took place at Kassim Pasha between Sir Percy Cox and Fethi Bey. No agreement was reached and in August 1924 the matter was referred by us to the League. The Turks then accepted League arbitrament. A commission was sent to the spot under Count Paul Teleki, the Hungarian geographer. They reported in July 1925. The League Council discussed this report in September of that year but the Turks refused to abide by their decision. In December 1925 the matter was referred to the Permanent Court at the Hague who decided that Turkey could not reject the ruling of the League of Nations. On June 5, 1926, the matter was finally settled by the signature of a Treaty between Great Britain, Turkey and Iraq, under which Mosul was given to the latter. It may be noted that the League of Nations Commission entirely confirmed all the arguments adduced by Curzon in his Mosul speech at the Lausanne Conference, and that the eventual frontier is to-day practically identical with that which he then claimed.

that Great Britain had now obtained all that she especially desired. The Mosul question was now no longer one upon which the Turks could dare to break up the Conference. All that remained were those questions regarding finance, economics and personal status which had been dealt with in the second and third Committees. With those questions France and Italy were more directly concerned than was Great Britain. The latter, of course, would maintain complete solidarity with her Allies. On the other hand the Conference could not continue for ever. He himself proposed to leave Lausanne on the night of February 4. The moment had thus arrived when the Turks must be impelled to a decision. The draft Treaty was by now in final shape. He proposed to summon a meeting of the Conference on that day week, January 31. The Treaty would then be presented to the Turks, who would be informed that if they could not agree to it by February 4 the Conference would dissolve. M. Bompard and Marchese Garroni thus had six clear days before them in which to exert amicable pressure upon their Turkish friends.

M. Bompard was disconcerted by this statement. It was humiliating to have to recognise that Lord Curzon, in his own Committee, had carried all before him, and that it had been the French and the Italians who had failed to bend the stubborn resistance of the Turks. The report which, that evening, he addressed to M. Poincaré has not been published. It seems to have aroused in the French Prime Minister that rancorous personal animosity of which, for all his essential greatness, he was sometimes capable. The final meeting had been fixed for January 31. On January 30

M. Poincaré issued through the Havas Agency a statement that the French Government did not regard the Treaty to be presented to the Turkish Delegation on the following day as a final document but merely as 'a basis of future discussion'. M. Bompard, in acute alarm, rushed to the telephone. We can only suppose that he pointed out to M. Poincaré the danger of a separate Treaty between Turkey and Great Britain. M. Poincaré immediately issued a supplementary statement to the effect that the Havas communiqué was unauthorised. But that communiqué had already produced a damaging effect.

On Wednesday, January 31, the Treaty in its final form was presented to the Turks for acceptance or rejection. They asked for eight days in which to consider their answer. M. Bompard and Marchese Garroni entreated Lord Curzon to grant this extra delay: he refused to do so: he would leave Lausanne on the night of Sunday, February 4, and not one hour longer would he remain: a violent altercation ensued: Curzon was adamant and the Turks were informed that they must be ready with their answer by February 4. A period of fevered activity ensued.

The points still outstanding were concerned with the status of foreigners resident in Turkey, with the financial clauses, and with such minor stipulations as contracts, insurance policies, and compensation to Allied companies who had suffered damage during the war.[1] The Turks argued that the system which the Allies proposed to substitute for the Capitulations still represented 'a servitude'. They objected to the pro-

[1] A more detailed account of the articles left undecided by the first Lausanne Conference will be found in Dr. Sousa's *The Capitulatory Régime of Turkey* (Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1933).

posed distribution of the Ottoman debt. They wanted an indemnity from Greece and they wished to omit from the Treaty all references to foreign concessions or foreign educational establishments in Turkey. There were other minor points which, between February 1 and 4, they also raised. On several of these they were granted satisfaction. The Allies, for instance, agreed to drop the provision restricting to 20,000 the number of armed men which Turkey could maintain in Thrace. Lord Curzon agreed to defer his appeal to the League regarding Mosul pending further direct negotiations. He also was prepared to meet Turkish desires in regard to British cemeteries on the Gallipoli peninsula, and he finally offered an arrangement by which Turkey would be compensated for the battleships which we had requisitioned at the outset of the war. Important modifications were also offered in the financial, economic and judicial clauses. By Saturday, February 3, these concessions had all been communicated to the Turkish Delegation. At 1.30 p.m. on Sunday, February 4, the Turkish counter-proposals were received. In this Note they agreed to accept the Straits Convention, the Thracian frontier, the Islands, direct negotiations regarding Mosul, the clauses regarding nationality and the minorities, a compromise in the matter of payment for the ships requisitioned, a compromise upon the Greek indemnity, and the sanitary clauses. They offered, therefore, to 'conclude peace' by signing a Treaty embodying the above questions, and by leaving the remaining financial and judicial questions open for later discussion.

This offer was obviously designed to tempt Lord Curzon into concluding, if not a separate peace, then a

peace in which British interests were satisfied, whereas those subjects with which the French and Italians were mainly concerned were left over for further discussion. The temptation to accept this offer was almost overpowering. Curzon knew that British public opinion would judge his failure or success entirely by whether a treaty had, or had not, been signed. They would not examine into the details of that treaty, and even if they did, they would read in it a complete satisfaction of British demands. The details which would be left over for subsequent discussion were intricate and would seem unimportant. He had the opportunity of achieving a resounding popular triumph. He resisted that opportunity. His faith, at that supreme moment, rose above his temperament. He knew that, essentially, the battle had been won. He had restored British prestige in the East. It remained to restore it in the West as well. To those who knew, to those who in the end counted, to accept the Turkish offer would be an act of disloyalty towards the Allies: to reject it, would be a lesson to France and Europe.

Lord Curzon informed M. Bompard and Marchese Garroni that he would not sign anything with which they themselves were not completely content.

7

The excitements and confusion of those last two days can, perhaps, be best conveyed by a contemporary account recorded in a diary kept by a member of Lord Curzon's staff:

> *Saturday, February* 3. Our final concessions are drawn up and sent to the Turks. All day there are mysterious comings and goings and a hum in the corridors. Curzon

is nervous, and somehow amused. I lunch with him and Harold Spender. Curzon teases Spender about liberal democracy. 'If I believed in it', he says, 'I could at this moment be a successful but dishonourable man.' He sends me up to see Venizelos about the Greek indemnity. I loathe trying to extract from Venizelos concessions of which I disapprove. I think back upon the old Paris days when he was triumphant. To-day he is humiliated and inconvenient. Yet his dignity is never diminished. He agrees to a formula. I take it back to the Marquis, who is pleased. 'Curious', he says, 'but you seem to be able to manage the Cretan.' I am angered by this, and show it. Curzon grins. For some odd reason he hates Venizelos. I then go up to the Lausanne Palace and show the formula to Bompard. He is, as usual, very *sous-préfet*. 'Mon cher ami . . .', that sort of thing. I then go and see the Turks. Hassan Bey. He accepts at first and then goes in to Ismet. The latter emerges amiably (what a nice man!) and says he must have a lump sum. Back to the Marquis and tell him of this. He says: 'Well, go to your friend Venizelos and get him to agree to a lump sum'. This is hell. I send for Michalocopoulos, warn him that anything he says will be taken in evidence against him, and ask him to sound the Πρόεδρος. I say that I shall come and see Venizelos later. He agrees. Come back and dine. After dinner Michalocopoulos returns. The Πρόεδρος will fix a lump sum if the whole question of peace turns upon it. I know very well that it doesn't. In a moment of fury I tell this to Michalocopoulos. Then I have to tell the Marquis that I lost my temper. What an odd man he is! He is delighted. 'Yes', he says, 'you were right. The whole thing is chaos here. Let us at least keep a clean slate. There will be no clean slates going by this time to-morrow.'

When I was up with Ismet, I met Riza Nur[1] in the

[1] Dr. Riza Nur Bey, Deputy for Sinope, Minister of Health in the Turkish Government, and second in command to Ismet Pasha. He had, before the

passage. He leered a pink grin. He took me aside. He said, 'Look here, why not make a separate peace with us?' The public school spirit assails me. 'Excellence,' I answer, 'l'Empire Britannique ne conclut pas de paix séparée.' 'But there are precedents . . .' he leers. 'Nous nous foutons', I answer, 'des précédents.' I suppose that was right. Magnificent, but not peace.

Sunday, February 4. Pack in the morning. We are all tense and depressed, awaiting the next Turkish move. At 1.30 it comes in the form of a Note. It accepts practically all the British claims, but holds out over economics and capitulations. At 2.40 Bompard comes, embarrassed and solicitous (when I *think* of his patronising attitude during the early stages I see red). He begs Curzon to make some further concessions upon *our* points. The Marquis throws in the ships and the appeal to the League over Mosul. Bompard, Rumbold and Montagna then go up to the Lausanne Palace to find out what the Turks really mean about the economic clauses. They come back at 4.0 and the allies meet again in Curzon's room. We talk together till 5.20 when Ismet is summoned. He arrives at 5.40. From then on the scene becomes emotional and confused.

Ismet is unhappy and embarrassed. He twists about in his chair, mops his forehead, dabs at his lips with his handkerchief and is very unhappy and nervous. Curzon in his arm-chair is imperturbable. I sit close behind him taking notes. Bompard speaks well. Garroni deplorably. Then the Marquis begins. He is unsurpassed. He uses every tone—cajolery, despair, menace, authority. 'I wish you', he says, 'Ismet Pasha, to realise that I have given up more than I thought possible.' (This is a lie: he has gained more than he thought possible and the old

nationalist movement, been among the most distinguished obstetric physicians of Sinope. Compared to the admirable Ismet Pasha he was not an agreeable or impressive man. Yet he was supposed to possess influence with the National Assembly and to report to them upon Ismet's desire to achieve a reasonable, or in his mind unvictorious, peace.

blighter knows it.) 'I have done this for the sake of peace. Peace, as M. Bompard says, is in your hands. If, within the next two hours, we do not conclude peace—then there will be no peace. There may be war, Ismet Pasha; there may be war. We cannot wait. I do implore you to accept, in the spirit of the concluding words of your own letter, the concessions we have made and to realise that we have come'—here the Marquis paused and hissed the last words in a dramatic Tennysonian whisper—'*to an end.*'

Ismet and Riza Nur retire at this to Crowe's room to discuss the situation. I accompany them out into the passage. Our luggage and our documents are being gathered together on the landing, and carpenters, under the refined supervision of Bill Bentinck, are hammering at packing-cases. The passages are blocked by journalists who have crept upstairs. We push through these encumbrances and I guide Ismet into Crowe's room. I return to the Marquis. The air in his sitting-room is foetid with crisis. He himself sits back in his chair, amused, dominant, exhausted. At 6.45 Ismet returns. He accepts *all* our own conditions but refuses the economic paragraphs. The Marquis, not without a touch of 'told-you-so' leers across at Bompard. Ismet also insists that Greece should not be allowed a counterclaim in reparation. The Marquis turns to me. 'Tell Venizelos', he says. Oh, my God! I go into the next room and telephone to Venizelos. He agrees. I return to the meeting and am met by a wall of agitated fug. They have got off the Greek indemnity and I gladly keep to myself the message from Venizelos. I hurry to my chair behind the Marquis and sit down good as gold. They are talking about capitulations. Bompard and Garroni, with the Marquis' superb support, bombard Ismet with appeals and menaces. As always, I feel sorry for the little man. So does the Marquis. But he sticks to his, or rather their, guns. Ismet is obdurate. For once he loses his temper.

He says, 'I shall return to Angora and tell my people that the Conference, under the Presidency of Lord Curzon, desired war . . .'. 'No! No! No!' they all shout. It is a tense moment. The telephone rings. I answer it. A little tiny voice . . . 'Japanese delegation here. . . .' I replace the receiver abruptly, and turn round to face the room. I find Curzon looking at his watch. 'You have', he says, 'only half an hour, Ismet Pasha, in which to save your country.'

Ismet dabs his handkerchief against his lips. He bounces on the chair. He puts the tips of his fingers against his forehead which is beaded with sweat. 'Je ne peux pas', he mumbles wretchedly, 'Je ne peux pas.' It is very painful. The Marquis, who likes Ismet, is obviously distressed. He smiles at him and makes vague sympathetic noises, which he imagines are French sort of noises. He then looks across at Bompard. 'Well . . . ?' he says. 'It is hopeless', Bompard answers. 'Hopeless', Curzon rejoins.

We get up and say good-bye. They leave the room sullenly, out into the corridor thronged with journalists and packing-cases. Among them is Massigli, armed with the final Treaty ready for signature. Ismet descends in the lift. I go with him. He recovers his composure. He leaves the hotel as if nothing very serious had happened. Bompard and Montagna are sent after him to suggest a new formula about capitulations. We telephone to the station and stop the Orient Express for half an hour. We snatch some dinner. At 9.15 we leave the hotel. There is a crowd at the station and many police. We lean out of the train hoping that at the last moment Ismet will relent. Bompard, fussy and out of breath, dashes up the staircase. 'No good', he says. 'Nous partons', I say to the stationmaster. Slowly the great train slides into the night."

8

Early the next morning Lord Curzon arrived in Paris. Lord Crewe, perhaps the most trusted of his later friends, came to meet him. The train chunked onwards towards Calais. Lord Curzon opened the newspapers. He first opened a French newspaper. 'Le triomphe', he read, 'de Lord Curzon.' He then opened the *Daily Mail*. Splashed across the page was a huge headline: 'Failure of Lord Curzon'. 'The British negotiators', he read, 'are returning under the cloud of a humiliating blunder.' For a few hours Curzon was depressed by this misrepresentation. Yet his inner conscience was at ease. The Cabinet had gathered in force at Victoria Station to receive him. He knew that from the expert, as distinct from the popular, point of view he had deserved well of his country.

The report of his achievement spread far and wide. It reached Berlin. It echoes in Lord D'Abernon's diary. 'German view is', he writes, 'that at Lausanne England and Turkey have become friends again. The French have been more or less overpowered there and have tacitly acquiesced in a policy they disliked.' 'Curzon', he notes again, 'has rendered an immense service, not only to England, but to the world. The unholy intimacy between Angora and Moscow was a menace of the gravest kind. If he should have destroyed this menace, it is a notable achievement.' 'Chicherin', he notes finally, 'does not conceal the fact that England scored a great success at the Conference and is on the eve of having Turkey again for a friend.'

Such, among people of knowledge and integrity, was the estimate of Curzon's achievement.[1]

[1] The epilogue to the first Lausanne Conference was as follows. On his return to Angora, Ismet Pasha induced the National Assembly to vote 'for peace' subject to certain modifications of the first Lausanne draft. These modifications were examined at a Conference in London held under Curzon's chairmanship. A second Conference was opened at Lausanne at which Great Britain was represented by Sir Horace Rumbold. It lasted from April 1923 until July. Further concessions were made to the Turks upon the capitulation and economic clauses. Curzon's own work at the first conference remained untouched. The Treaty was eventually signed on July 4, 1923, and ratified by the Assembly at Angora in the following August.

Chapter XII

THE LAST BATTLES

1923-1925

Curzon returns from Lausanne with enhanced confidence and prestige—Mr. Bonar Law's illness and retirement—Curzon is summoned to London by Lord Stamfordham—He assumes that he is to be Prime Minister—He is told that Mr. Baldwin has been chosen in his place—His sense of public duty triumphs over this humiliation—He returns to the Foreign Office and initiates the campaign against M. Poincaré—His confidence increased by an unexpected triumph over the Soviet—He manœuvres M. Poincaré into the wrong and by his Note of August 11 rallies world-opinion to his side—This success interrupted by the Corfu incident in which he shows weakness—And cancelled by Mr. Baldwin's visit to Paris and the ensuing communiqué which in effect disavows Curzon's policy—Poincaré, thus encouraged, embarks on his policy of Rhineland separatism—Curzon counters immediately and sends Mr. Clive to report—Resultant collapse of the separatist movement and Curzon's justification—Fall of the Baldwin Government—On Baldwin's return in November Lord Curzon made Lord President of the Council—He accepts this second humiliation with humorous acquiescence—He dies.

I

CURZON returned from Lausanne in a mood of combative self-confidence. The fall of Lloyd George had demonstrated that public opinion would no longer tolerate that duality of control which had blurred our foreign policy during four unhappy years. He himself, within four short months, had proved that, if left alone, he could manipulate the levers with consummate mastery. All but the most ignorant or biassed of his critics agreed that he had, by his handling of the Lausanne Conference, restored British prestige in the East. A further combat remained; and with an ad-

versary more potent and more skilled than any Ismet, than any Msutapha Kemal. It remained to restore, as against M. Poincaré, our credit in Europe.

Curzon applied himself with cautious relish to the last great battle of his career. Carefully he planned his campaign against Raymond Poincaré.

The Cabinet of Mr. Bonar Law were less belligerently minded. They were still stunned by the collapse of the Paris Conference on January 4 and by the rupture of the Anglo-French alliance which had then resulted. They desired to retire once again into splendid isolation and to watch with neutral but pessimistic eyes the ruin and disintegration of the German Empire. Mr. Bonar Law with irresistible gentleness would lay his head on one side and murmur words of weary negation. Herr Sthamer, the German Ambassador, would, with suffering dignity, urge Lord Curzon to intervene between France and Germany. Curzon was affected neither by the discouragement of Mr. Bonar Law, nor yet by the solicitations of Senator Sthamer. He kept his own counsel; he bided his time. In March, he crossed to France to undergo a cure for phlebitis in the gentle valley of the Loire. He took with him the whole dossier of the Reparation problem. He soaked himself in its contents. In April, refreshed and fortified, he returned to London. The Cabinet were still anxious to maintain benevolent neutrality as between France and Germany. 'None of them', remarked Mr. Lloyd George to Lord D'Abernon on March 28, 'appear to be doing much except Curzon, and he only goes on burnishing his own halo.'[1]

Mr. Lloyd George's intuition was not at fault.

[1] D'Abernon, *Ambassador of Peace*, vol. ii, p. 185.

During those early months of 1923 Lord Curzon's day-dreams had swirled persistently around a single formula: 'Viceroy of India, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Prime Minister of Great Britain'. That formula, he once confessed, had echoed in his heart for fifty years, recurring at moments of suspended activity, intruding suddenly upon his consciousness as some familiar tune, piercing as the *leit-motif* through all the turbulent orchestration of his career. In that April of 1923 it returned to him with throbbing insistence. Mr. Bonar Law was ill; it was whispered that he must resign. Chamberlain, with obstinate loyalty, had sacrificed his prospects. Balfour had no desire to resume the weight of office. There was no one else. There *could* be no one else. The temperature of Curzon's ambition rose rapidly from the subnormal of a day-dream to the register of high fever. It was possible; it was probable; it was *certain*. Early in May Mr. Bonar Law absented himself from the meetings of the Cabinet: it was Curzon, and not Cave, whom he asked to preside in his place. That was more than a mere formality: it was an indication: it was a promise. There is no evidence that Mr. Bonar Law ever entered into any formal undertaking. Yet to the end of his life Curzon remained convinced that Bonar Law had promised, in the event of his own resignation, to recommend that Curzon should take his place.

On Saturday, May 19, Lord Curzon left London for the Whitsun recess. He travelled down to Montacute. On the morning of Monday, May 21, he received from Mr. Bonar Law a letter announcing that he had placed his resignation in the King's hands. 'I am sorry to say', wrote Mr. Bonar Law, 'that I find it necessary to

resign. . . . I understand that it is not customary for the King to ask the Prime Minister to recommend his successor in circumstances like the present and I presume that he will not do so; but if, as I hope, he accepts my resignation at once, he will have to take immediate steps about my successor.'

There was no telephone installed at Montacute. Throughout that Whit Monday Lord Curzon remained in the country a prey to excited impatience. Towards the evening a policeman was observed approaching the front door upon a bicycle. A telegram was delivered to Lord Curzon. He opened it with trembling fingers. It contained a message from Lord Stamfordham, summoning him to London without delay. He regarded that message as equivalent to an offer of the Premiership.

On the morning of Tuesday, May 22, he travelled up from Somerset with Lady Curzon. During the journey he discussed their future plans. 'I shall use No. 10', he said, 'only for official purposes. We shall still live and entertain at Carlton House Terrace. I shall remain Curzon, even though Prime Minister.' During the rest of the journey he discoursed upon ecclesiastical appointments. They arrived in London. The photographers with their cameras were busy at the railway station and a further group awaited them at Carlton House Terrace. They lunched expectantly. They waited: they waited. At 3.30 p.m. Lord Stamfordham was announced. With some embarrassment he explained that the King had decided to send for Mr. Baldwin. Curzon insisted that so ludicrous a decision should immediately be reversed. Lord Stamfordham explained that at that very moment Mr. Bald-

win was being received at Buckingham Palace. Curzon gasped. The dream of his lifetime lay shattered at his feet. Lord Stamfordham left him. In an agony of mortification he collapsed into a chair. Lady Curzon tried to console him. He wept like a child. He had forgotten Baldwin. Nobody had ever thought of Baldwin. 'Not even a public figure', sobbed Curzon. 'A man of no experience. And of the utmost insignificance.' He bowed his face in his hands. 'The utmost insignificance', he repeated.

It is now known that Lord Stamfordham in sending that message down to Montacute had been guilty of no wanton cruelty. When the message was first despatched it was intended that the post of Prime Minister should in fact be offered to Lord Curzon. In the interval between Monday night and Tuesday morning many forces had been mobilised. The Labour Party had indicated that it would be irksome for them, as His Majesty's Opposition, were the Prime Minister to be a member of the Upper House. Balfour had intervened to suggest that Curzon was temperamentally unsuited to guide the destinies of the country in a democratic age. Certain leading Conservatives—Lord Long, Mr. Amery and others—had also conveyed to Buckingham Palace their serious misgivings. The cumulative effect of these representations was to reverse the previous decision. And thus Mr. Baldwin drove to Buckingham Palace in Lord Curzon's place.

For a space of twelve hours Curzon remained crushed by this, the most ruinous of his many disappointments. Slowly the clouds lifted. 'His invincible humour', records Lord D'Abernon, 'soon regained sway'. Yet it was more than his humour. It was also his faith, his

sense of public duty. On the next day he addressed to Mr. Baldwin the following magnanimous letter:

> My Dear Baldwin,
>
> Allow me to congratulate you warmly upon your appointment to be Prime Minister and to wish you every success in your administration. I have seriously considered your kind invitation to me to continue in the office which I recently filled. I have every desire to retire. But, as there are certain things which in the public interest I ought perhaps to endeavour to carry through, and as my retirement at this moment might be thought to involve distrust in your administration, which would be a quite unfounded suspicion, I will for the present continue at the Foreign Office.

On May 27 it fell to Lord Curzon to propose that Mr. Baldwin be elected leader of the Conservative Party. He did so with eloquence and calm. He then returned to his battle with M. Poincaré.[1]

2

He was reinforced in this, the opening stages of his campaign, by an incidental, and somewhat unexpected, victory which he had in the interval secured against the Soviet Republic. One of the most constant of his many sources of disagreement with Mr. Lloyd George had been the propensity of the latter to flirt with the dictators of Moscow. Curzon, from his bed of sickness, had watched with ill-concealed delight the resounding failure, at the Conference of Genoa, of Lloyd George's pro-Russian policy. Dr. Rathenau, by

[1] The above version of the story is that in which Lord Curzon himself believed. It may be questioned, however, whether, in view of the inconvenience of having as Prime Minister a member of the House of Lords, it was ever definitely intended to offer Lord Curzon the appointment. Nor does the actual wording of Lord Stamfordham's telegram to Montacute justify the optimistic assumptions which Lord Curzon made.

concluding with the Bolsheviks the separate agreement of Rapallo, rendered that failure all the more sensational. Curzon, who had from the outset detested Mr. Lloyd George's Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement of March 16, 1921, had continued to snipe at the Moscow authorities on the ground of the ill-treatment of British subjects and the persistence of anti-British propaganda in the Middle East. Mr. C. F. Davison had been judicially murdered in January 1920, and Mrs. Stan Harding had been unjustly imprisoned in June of the same year. An embittered exchange of Notes ensued between Lord Curzon and Chicherin. In March 1923 Archbishop Cieplak and Monsignor Butkevic, two leading Roman Catholic prelates in Russia, had been arrested by the Ogpu and the Monsignor had been shot. On March 30, 1923, Lord Curzon had addressed to Moscow a Note protesting against the injustice of these sentences. M. Chicherin, still smarting from Lausanne, replied to this protest in a Note in which he spoke of the 'assassination in cold blood' of political prisoners in Ireland and cited similar 'atrocities' committed by British troops in India and Egypt. Curzon was aroused. On May 2, 1923, he addressed to M. Chicherin one of the most thunderous denunciations ever composed. The Russian Note, he said, imposed upon His Majesty's Government 'the duty, which has perhaps been already too long delayed, of considering whether it is desirable, or indeed possible, that the relations between the two Governments should remain any longer upon so anomalous and indeed unprecedented a footing and whether His Majesty's Government can, with due respect, continue to ignore the repeated challenges

which the Soviet Government have thought fit, with apparent deliberation, to throw down'.

With this introduction Lord Curzon embarked upon a statement of Russian iniquities since 1920. The Davison and Stan Harding cases, the treatment of Archbishop Cieplak and Monsignor Butkevic, the outrages inflicted on British trawlers on the Murman coast, were all expounded with indignant if forensic lucidity. Lord Curzon then turned to propaganda conducted by the Soviet Government in Persia, Afghanistan, India, Turkey, the British Dominions, even in Great Britain itself. 'More recently', he wrote, 'these pernicious activities have been vigorously resumed. It would be easy to fill many pages with a narrative of these proceedings resting upon unimpeachable authority. Such a narrative would doubtless provoke, as it did before, an indignant denial from the Soviet Government with allegations as to false information and spurious documents. His Majesty's Government have no intention to embark upon any such controversy. They are content to rely exclusively upon communications which have passed in the last few months between the Russian Government and its agents, and which are in their possession, and upon the recorded acts of members of the Soviet Government itself.'

Lord Curzon then proceeded to quote the text of messages and instructions exchanged between the Soviet Government and their representatives in Persia and India which had been intercepted by our own intelligence service. In so doing he was committing an appalling breach of diplomatic decorum. The Foreign Office was aghast. Never, even in the most embittered diplomatic controversy, had information

thus obtained been cited as evidence. Curzon insisted. Nothing but the most circumstantial proof would convince British opinion of the justice of his indictment: nothing but chapter and verse would prevent the Soviet from countering his allegations with a blank denial. It must be admitted that his evidence, as displayed in page after page of textual quotation, was overwhelming. Even M. Chicherin was overwhelmed. Curzon's method, although illegitimate, was successful. He concluded his Note with the threat of rupture. 'The exchange', he wrote, 'of correspondence conducted by one of the two parties in such temper and language (as that of the Russian Note of March 30) is not merely inconsistent with that standard of courtesy which ordinarily prevails in the relations between Governments but places the continuance of such relations in grave jeopardy. When further it is remembered that this is only the latest incident in a long series of studied affronts . . . it seems difficult to arrive at any other conclusion than that the Soviet Government are either convinced that His Majesty's Government will accept any insult sooner than break with Soviet Russia or that they desire themselves to bring the relations created by the Trade Agreement to an end.' His Majesty's Government would thus be compelled to denounce the Trade Agreement unless within ten days full satisfaction were given for the several outrages, and the officials responsible for acts of propaganda were 'disowned and recalled from the scene of their maleficent labours'.

The Soviet Government wriggled for a day or two and then collapsed. By June 13 a formula was accepted by both Governments which, for the moment, put an

end to the tension. Encouraged by his triumph over Chicherin Lord Curzon resumed his long-drawn battle with M. Poincaré.

3

That contest can be divided into two phases. During the first phase, which centred upon the French occupation of the Ruhr, M. Poincaré was able to repulse Curzon's onslaughts and to gain a Pyrrhic victory. During the second phase, which was concerned mainly with the French desire to detach the Rhineland from Germany, it was Lord Curzon who triumphed.

On January 11, 1923, the French and Belgian forces, under General Degoutte, entered the Ruhr territory, accompanied by a body of civilian experts known as the 'Mission Interalliée de Contrôle des Usines et des Mines', or 'Micum', whose task it was to administer and exploit the 'productive pledges' which M. Poincaré had claimed. The German directors of the Ruhr Coal Syndicate had already escaped to Hamburg. Micum found itself obliged to deal with the local population direct, and that population, under orders from Berlin, adopted an attitude of passive resistance. The German Government, as a reprisal for the occupation, suspended all reparation delivery to France and announced that they would themselves finance from public funds the passive resistance of the Ruhr workmen. The French countered by extending their area of occupation beyond the Kehl bridge-head. A highly delicate situation was thus created in the Rhineland High Commission. This Commission had been constituted under the Peace Treaty as a civilian body administering the several areas of occupation. It had

originally consisted of representatives of the United States, France, Great Britain and Belgium. The American member had, however, been withdrawn with the American army of occupation on January 10, 1923, the day before the Ruhr occupation. The British member thus found himself in a minority of one. The French and Belgians endeavoured to use their majority vote on the Commission in order to weld the Ruhr and Rhineland zones into a single area of Franco-Belgian occupation. The British Government refused to consent to such a scheme, and the authorities controlling the British zone of occupation were instructed, in the absence of specific orders, not to execute the ordinances of a Commission which had become a purely Franco-Belgian body. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the British zone intervened between the French and Belgian zones as well as between the French area in the Rhineland and the Ruhr basin. Our obstruction, while it encouraged the local Germans, severely hampered the French. The friction thus created was incessant and embittered. It was thus in an atmosphere of heated recrimination that Curzon endeavoured, cautiously and tentatively, to effect some compromise between Germany and France.

His task was not an easy one. He knew, as the Germans knew, that any mediation on our part could only be 'fragile and uncertain'. On the one hand, M. Poincaré was in physical possession of the Ruhr, was determined to stake everything upon exploiting that possession to his economic advantage, and knew very well that Great Britain could never employ force to turn him out. On the other hand, such negative pressure as we could apply would have reacted to

M. Poincaré's advantage. Again and again Curzon was urged to make a 'gesture of public protest' and to withdraw our forces and our High Commissioner from the Rhineland. Obviously such a withdrawal would have played straight into the hands of the French. Humiliating though our position was, Lord Curzon insisted that we should remain in the Rhineland, and that our campaign should be conducted, not in the form of a frontal attack, still less by a strategical retreat, but by a slow encircling movement on the flank. As the area of that movement, he chose the Reparation question.[1] It possessed certain advantages. It was the ostensible cause and justification of the whole Ruhr enterprise. By accepting M. Poincaré's contention that he had entered the Ruhr solely on Reparation account, Curzon was able to place the French Prime Minister in an awkward position. Reparation was not an exclusively French or Belgian interest: other countries, such as Great Britain, the

[1] In Chapter VIII the story of the Reparation problem was brought up to the failure of the Genoa Conference in April 1922. On August 1, 1922, A. J. Balfour, who was in charge of the Foreign Office during Curzon's illness, issued the 'Balfour Note' in which the British Government offered to renounce all claim to Reparation as well as to all debts owing to them from the Allies provided this renunciation formed part of a 'general settlement'. This Note was ill-received both in the United States and France. At the London Conference of August 7-14, 1922, M. Poincaré outlined his scheme for 'productive guarantees' which included such drastic measures as the appropriation of German customs receipts, of 60 per cent. of the capital of the German dyestuff industries, and the exploitation of the State forests and mines. The British Government refused to agree to this action. In November 1922 the German Government made a further offer which was based on the recommendation of an international committee of experts which they had themselves appointed. At the London Conference of December 9-11, 1922, this offer was scarcely considered and M. Poincaré still insisted on his 'productive guarantees'. He then induced the Reparation Commission to declare Germany in default on timber deliveries and it was under the shadow of this artificial default that was held the Paris Conference of January 1-4, 1923. At that Conference Mr. Bonar Law recorded his cordial disagreement with M. Poincaré and he therefore entered the Ruhr alone on January 11.

United States and the minor Powers possessed claims under this heading; these claims were guaranteed by treaty and by interallied agreements such as that of Spa. It might be a fact, although we doubted it, that in seizing the Ruhr industries M. Poincaré would in the end provide himself with 'productive pledges' for France. Yet by this very action he was forcing our common debtor into bankruptcy and depriving the joint creditors of their rights and expectations. With admirable skill and patience Curzon developed this thesis. He thereby manœuvred M. Poincaré further and further into the wrong.[1] Had the Germans been more skilful they might have assisted him in this manœuvre. As it was, they did just the wrong thing, in just the wrong manner, at just the wrong moment.

America had withdrawn from the Reparation Commission and the Rhineland: it was essential, unless the dispute were to degenerate into an unequal triangular contest between France, Great Britain and Germany, to get her back. Her return to Europe could only be managed under the guise of 'an impartial investigation'. Lord D'Abernon had for many months been pressing this device upon Lord Curzon. It was not until April 1923 that the latter at length realised its ingenuity and wisdom. On April 20, by a speech in the House of Lords, he gave Germany her opening. He called upon her to make a 'firm offer' such as might ease the present deadlock. Lord D'Abernon at the same time drew their earnest attention to a speech made by Mr. Hughes, American Secretary of State,

[1] It should be noted, also, that Curzon at the same time kept a door open for a general Anglo-French alliance. By initiating, and successfully concluding, negotiations for the settlement of the Tangier dispute he provided a balm and a lubricant which, in the end, proved timely and efficacious.

on December 29 of the previous year. Mr. Hughes had then indicated that there would be no objection on the part of the Administration to a 'distinguished United States citizen serving upon some committee of enquiry composed of experts'. The Germans took this hint, but, as is their custom, they took many other hints as well. In their reply of May 2 they did, it is true, mention something about an 'impartial investigation', yet in the main body of their Note they went back to the old 'lump sum' idea and blundered badly. On May 13 Curzon begged them to 'reconsider and expand their proposals'. It was not until June 7 that he obtained from them the reply that he desired. They then stated categorically that they would accept the decision of an impartial body, both as regards their total liability and the methods of payment. M. Poincaré became alarmed. He informed Lord Curzon that the German offer was unacceptable since it contained no promise that they would abandon passive resistance in the Ruhr, since it suggested no figure for their total liability, and since any impartial body entrusted with such powers would derogate from the supreme authority devolving, under the Treaty, upon the Reparation Commission. On July 20 Curzon suggested to M. Poincaré that, in return for the abandonment of passive resistance, the creditor Powers might agree to accept the decision of an impartial body of experts regarding Germany's capacity to pay. Poincaré replied to this that he would refuse to consider any negotiation unless passive resistance were first abandoned. The precision and acerbity of his intimation were such that the Cabinet were anxious to suspend all further argument. Curzon insisted. With

the help of Sir Eyre Crowe he prepared, and induced the Cabinet to accept, his rejoinder of August 11. In this famous Note he not only insisted upon our rights under the Spa protocol but contended that the French occupation of the Ruhr could not be justified by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. This Note, which reviewed the whole past history and present elements of the controversy, was described by Stresemann as the 'clearest and strongest' State document which he had ever read. Its effect was immediate. Lord D'Abernon, at the time, described that effect as '*magical*'. '*In Germany*', *he wrote*, '*it had contributed* most powerfully to restore order, and to inspire the ruling classes with some courage and determination to save themselves. It has had a no less powerful effect upon the French attitude towards Germany.'[1] M. Poincaré on August 20 replied to Curzon with a masterly statement of the French point of view. It was obvious, however, that the arrow had pierced his flesh. The French Prime Minister complained with some acerbity of Curzon's lack of 'discretion': he became uneasy as to the effect upon world-opinion of Curzon's flaming proclamations; the strain of the last nine months had begun to tell upon him; morbid suspicions assailed him, suspicions of an Anglo-German alliance, suspicions of some world combine organised by Curzon to force the hand of France. It is from this period that dates the strange story of the overtures which he addressed to Japan suggesting a Franco-Japanese alliance as a counterweight to 'Anglo-Saxon hegemony'.

[1] Lord D'Abernon, *An Ambassador of Peace*, vol. ii, p. 233. See also von Maltzan's remarks recorded on p. 234, *ibid.*

4

The problem at this stage became complicated by two sensational events; the one inevitable, the other wholly accidental.

The first event was the collapse of the mark. In January 1923, at the date when the French had first entered the Ruhr, the mark had already depreciated from a nominal value of 20 to the pound to 81,200 to the pound. By August it fell to 19,800,000, by September it slid to 250,000,000 and in November it reached the figure of 22,300,000,000. The hurricane of inflation howled across the fields of Germany and whined through her cities, whirling before it a snow-cloud of paper marks, sweeping into ruin the careful savings of a whole population. A man who by forty years of labour and domestic economy had accumulated a small capital of £5,000 would find that capital diminish, between 9.30 a.m. and noon, to 12s. 7d. A reckless despair seized upon the German people. Communist risings broke out in Saxony and Thuringia. The middle classes were ruined and in desperation. There was nothing to hope for. The end of their whole world had come. Let them at least involve their enemies in the conflagration by which they themselves were being consumed.

On August 11, the very day on which Curzon signed his Note, the Cuno Government resigned. The helm was taken by Gustav Stresemann. He at once caused the Curzon Note to be published in every newspaper, and had several million copies printed in parallel columns in English and German, which were distributed throughout the country. By this wise ex-

pedient he 'diminished the despondency of the orderly sections and stirred them to make further efforts to save the situation'.[1] With the disorderly sections he would deal with ruthless force. Complete national hysteria was thus checked; the communist menace, for the time, was averted.

Curzon, at that very moment, relaxed his grip. Since his return from Lausanne in February he had held the levers of foreign policy firmly within his own hands, permitting neither Mr. Bonar Law nor Mr. Baldwin to intervene. His aim had been to maintain throughout an attitude of reserved and disapproving neutrality. He knew that Great Britain alone could make no frontal attack on M. Poincaré, and he thus based his strategy upon a wide encircling movement, keeping the French upon the unfavourable ground of Reparation, encouraging the Germans to offer reasonable conditions of armistice, and hoping to mobilise in their and our support, not American opinion only, but the opinion of the world. His Note of August 11 had done much to improve our strategical position. It made it clear to French opinion that we strongly disapproved of the whole Ruhr policy. It offered to German opinion some hope of rescue from the abyss which yawned before them. And it convinced the other creditors of Germany that, if any further debts were to be collected, the whole French policy of making impossible demands for Reparation and then enforcing these demands by purely destructive sanctions would have to be abandoned. The advantage gained by the Note of August 11 should have been pursued with unremitting vigour and consistency. It was not

[1] Lord D'Abernon, *An Ambassador of Peace*, vol. ii, p. 236.

pursued. Ten days after despatching his Note Curzon, who had been suffering from a renewed attack of phlebitis, left for Bagnolles where he amused himself by writing his book on *British Government in India*. In his absence an incident occurred which, although it had no direct relation to the Anglo-French or Franco-German contest, produced results which were severely damaging to the policy which Curzon had hitherto pursued.

5

Among the many problems which had been left over from the Peace Conference was that of the delimitation of the frontier between Albania and Greece. This delimitation had been entrusted to an interallied Commission under the direction of the Ambassadors' Conference. On August 27, 1923, the Italian member of this Commission, General Tellini, was shot by brigands in the vicinity of Janina and on Greek soil. M. Mussolini, without waiting to assure himself whether the Greek authorities were in any sense responsible for this outrage, addressed an ultimatum to the Athens Government which contained humiliating demands. The latter accepted at once all but two of the five conditions of that ultimatum. M. Mussolini thereat sent an Italian squadron to Corfu, bombarded the citadel in which only refugees were housed, killed sixteen Armenian children, and occupied the island. The Greek Government appealed, under the articles of the Covenant, to the League of Nations.

Here, if ever, was the very type of international incident for which the League had been created. A Great Power had, in circumstances of sensational

brutality, violated the articles of the Covenant by taking direct action against a Small Power. The latter had appealed to Geneva for protection. The League, at that very moment, happened to be in full session of the Fourth Assembly. Should the Assembly fail, in such flagrant circumstances, to enforce obedience to the Covenant, it was realised that the authority of the League would for ever be impaired.

The Assembly opened at Geneva on September 1. On September 2 Lord Curzon reached London from Bagnolles. He was still suffering from phlebitis and travelled at once to Kedleston. Two Foreign Office officials met him at Victoria and accompanied him to St. Pancras. During this short transit, and while waiting upon the platform, they expounded to him the most recent developments of the Corfu incident. The Italians claimed that as General Tellini was technically employed by the Ambassadors' Conference, it was that body, and not the League of Nations, who possessed jurisdiction. On the other hand Greece had appealed to the League under Articles 10, 11, 12 and 15 of the Covenant. It was obviously impossible, once such an appeal had been made, to withdraw the dispute from the competence of Geneva and to transfer it to Paris. The Assembly regarded the incident as a test case of their authority: the Small Powers were united in insisting that this authority should be established; it was essential, if the League were to be preserved from ridicule, that the Ambassadors' Conference should not be allowed to intervene.

Lord Curzon had never taken any personal interest in the League of Nations. In 1920 that body had held twelve meetings, in 1921 seven meetings, in 1922 six

meetings. Curzon had absented himself from all these reunions. He sat there, in his compartment at St. Pancras, his foot outstretched upon its green baize rest, reading the telegrams which had arrived overnight. His lips moved with a faint rustle as he read them. He laid them aside upon the seat. 'Yes', he said, 'there can be no doubt about it. The machinery of the League must be put in motion. Telegraph to Bob Cecil instructing him to go full steam ahead.' He picked up a novel which lay beside him. He was exhausted by his journey from France. The Foreign Office officials, having obtained the instructions they desired, returned to Downing Street. Within an hour Lord Robert Cecil, at Geneva, had received instructions to insist, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, upon the full maintenance of the authority of the League.

He executed this instruction with determined courage. At the session of September 5, Signor Salandra, the Italian delegate, stated that it was 'the irreconcilable opinion' of the Italian Government that 'the Council of the League of Nations should not proceed to take action on the request of Greece'. Lord Robert Cecil called upon the interpreter to read aloud Articles 10, 12 and 15. The interpreter referred to them as 'the Articles of the Covenant'. 'No', corrected Lord Robert Cecil, 'of the Treaty of Versailles'. The French, who had been instructed by M. Poincaré to support the Italian point of view, were much disconcerted by this untimely reminder that the Covenant formed part of their own sacred charter. Lord Robert's triumph was complete. The prestige of England had been affirmed in full Assembly.

It was at this stage that Curzon, unaccountably, collapsed. Under French pressure the Ambassadors' Conference in Paris had been working day and night to produce an alternative scheme such as would save the face of the Italian Government. M. Mussolini had indicated that he would evacuate Corfu if he obtained full satisfaction from the Ambassadors' Conference, but that he must refuse to surrender to any dictation from Geneva. The *Daily Mail* started a hysterical campaign against our support of the League of Nations, accusing Lord Robert Cecil, Lord Curzon and the Foreign Office of 'war-mongering'. Communication with Lord Curzon was difficult and disagreeable. The telephone at Kedleston was housed in the butler's pantry. The summonses which reached him from a distracted Foreign Office were either ignored, or answered in circumstances of acute mutual discomfort. The memories of those conversations, preceded as they were by the sound of Curzon's heavy foot upon the stone flooring of his domestic offices, will for ever be painful for those who were obliged to conduct them. Up to the last moment Curzon maintained his support of Lord Robert Cecil and the League. On September 10 he suddenly withdrew that support. Lord Crewe, in Paris, was instructed to accept the compromise scheme elaborated by the Ambassadors. The Council of the League were also obliged, in view of our surrender, to renounce their own authority. A settlement was imposed upon Greece which was demonstrably unfair. Corfu was evacuated by the Italians, but the League of Nations had suffered a defeat from which its prestige has never recovered.

That nemesis which waits on those who show weak-

ness in high places was not slow to impose on Curzon a penalty for this vacillation. His hesitation over the Corfu incident not only damaged our prestige in Europe and the world, but weakened Curzon's own authority in the Cabinet. M. de Saint Aulaire, the French Ambassador in London, was quick to take advantage of the discomfiture of M. Poincaré's most formidable opponent. He arranged that Mr. Baldwin, who during the Corfu crisis had been staying at Aix-les-Bains, should visit M. Poincaré in Paris on his return journey. The meeting took place at the British Embassy on September 20. A communiqué was thereafter issued to the effect that the French and British Prime Ministers 'had been happy to establish an agreement of views and to discover that on no questions is there any difference of purpose, or divergence of purpose, which could impair the cooperation of the two countries'.

Lord Curzon, on reading this communiqué, was aghast. He regarded it, as others regarded it, as a repudiation, by his own Prime Minister, of the policy of strict neutrality as between France and Germany for which he had been responsible since February. From that moment his relations with M. de Saint Aulaire became strained to the point of rupture. His resentment of Mr. Baldwin's apparent act of disloyalty was extreme.[1] And he refused thereafter to speak to a high Foreign Office official whom he regarded, rightly or

[1] Curzon's resentment at Mr. Baldwin's part in this unhappy affair was unjust. The Prime Minister had warned him in advance of his intended visit to M. Poincaré and had explained that the purpose of that visit was to impress upon the French Government that there were no longer two foreign policies in London but only one. That the ensuing communiqué should have conveyed a directly opposite impression was not the fault of Mr. Baldwin, who was not present when the communiqué was drafted.

wrongly, as having been responsible for the communiqué, if not for the interview itself.

Upon Germany the Paris communiqué descended as a thunderbolt. The encouraging effect of the Note of August 11 was cancelled in a night. They had for some time been rendered uneasy by the violent campaign being conducted by the Harmsworth Press against Lord Curzon and Mr. Baldwin on the score of their 'pro-German' sentiments. They were aware also that the francophil section of the Cabinet was very powerful. They assumed, not unnaturally, that Mr. Baldwin, in view of this pressure, had decided to reverse Lord Curzon's policy. 'The result', records Lord D'Abernon, 'was that we lost influence in determining Anglo-French policy and became subordinate to our Ally. It might be wise to apply to English Prime Ministers the rule governing the peregrinations of a Lord Chancellor and forbid their leaving England'.[1]

Four days after this communiqué the German Government capitulated to M. Poincaré. Passive resistance was abandoned and reparation deliveries in kind were resumed. To all appearances M. Poincaré had triumphed, and Lord Curzon had failed.

6

These appearances were, however, deceptive. True it was that M. Poincaré had succeeded, in spite of Curzon's opposition, in imposing his will, not upon the Ruhr only, but also upon Herr Stresemann. The rewards which he gained by this victory were not of durable importance: the penalties which he incurred

[1] D'Abernon, *Ambassador of Peace*, vol. ii, p. 285.

have lasted until this day. The ruin which he caused,[1] the sufferings which he inflicted, destroyed the German middle classes (the sole bulwark of a pacific policy) and created that neurotic Reich by which we are to-day menaced. The cruelties[2] inseparable from so forceful an occupation left behind them an abiding legacy of resentment, hatred and despair. M. Poincaré, in this venture, proved unworthy of his own unquestioned intelligence, of his own undoubted integrity.

Lord Curzon has been criticised for having, during this vital period, preferred dialectical exhibitions to creative policy. It has been contended that he had the intelligence to realise from the very outset that M. Poincaré was trying to obtain for France political and economic advantages at the expense, not of the Allies only, but also of mankind. It has been argued that he should therefore have faced the fact that the Ruhr occupation was not only technically illegal and financially damaging, but a menace to the peace of Europe. And that he should therefore have taken stronger measures to prevent so fateful a consummation. Alternatively, he should either have supported Germany with consistent sympathy and advice, or else have urged her to an earlier surrender. As it was, he encouraged her sufficiently to stimulate resistance, but not sufficiently to avert ruin. There is much force in

[1] The Ruhr basin in 1923 represented 80-85 per cent. of Germany's total coal resources, 80 per cent. of her steel and pig-iron production, 70 per cent. of traffic in goods and minerals, and 10 per cent. of her population. To sterilise such an area for more than twelve months could only produce gangrene.

[2] The following figures give some idea of the results of General Degoutte's repression. During the occupation some 147,000 Germans were expelled from the Ruhr, including 5,764 railway workers and 17,237 of their dependents. 376 people were killed and 2,092 wounded.

this criticism. It is the story of Greece and Turkey over again.

It is true that Curzon was deficient in creative imagination. He could, with superb clarity, expound the past: he could also, with brilliant competence, deal with the present; yet he was sometimes unable to envisage the future. He knew that Poincaré was wrong: he knew exactly how and why he was wrong: but he was not able to forecast, or even to imagine, the serious consequences of this error. He was never at his best when coping with the potential.

Fortunately for Curzon's reputation, M. Poincaré at this moment committed a grave and, above all, a specific, blunder. He endeavoured, by fomenting artificially a separatist movement in the Rhineland, to detach that area from the German Reich. Here were definite actions. Curzon was always at his best when coping with the immediately precise.

The French had staged the separatist movement in two sections. The first was to take place in the Rhineland proper under the protection of the French and Belgian armies of occupation. On October 21, 1923, a 'Rhineland Republic' was proclaimed at Aachen in the Belgian zone. Curzon at once notified the Belgian Government that Great Britain would oppose the separation of the Rhineland from the German Reich. The Belgians were alarmed by this sharp pronouncement and from that moment there was no further talk of separatism in the Belgian area. The movement then spread to the French zones of occupation. With the assistance of French troops separatist administrations were established at Bonn on October 21, at Trier and Wiesbaden on October 22, at Mainz on October 22.

Herr Matthes and Dr. Dortin were placed at the head of this new Republic. They quarrelled. The German civil service boycotted the administration and the public services collapsed. The Government of Dr. Matthes died of utter inanition.

Having failed in the Rhineland, the French then concentrated their efforts on the Bavarian Palatinate. On October 24, Major Louis, representing General de Metz, informed the Diet of Speyer that the Palatinate had been constituted 'an autonomous State'. The Diet refused to accept this intimation, and thereupon some 19,000 local officials were deported by the French authorities. On December 22 the French High Commissioner at Coblentz notified his colleagues on the Rhineland High Commission that 'an autonomous Government of the Palatinate' had been constituted as from November 11. The British High Commissioner protested violently, and as usual was outvoted. He telegraphed to Curzon.

The latter, being a fine tactician, realised at once that the French had at last occupied a position which was wholly untenable. He counter-attacked with skill and assurance. He first proclaimed in the House of Lords that His Majesty's Government would refuse to recognise 'this hasty and upstart simulacrum of a Government'. He then officially notified the French Government that Mr. Robert Clive, the British Consul-General at Munich, in whose consular area the Palatinate was included, had been instructed to visit the district and to report on local conditions. M. Poincaré answered that the *exequatur* of a Consul did not apply to occupied territory. Curzon replied that Mr. Consul-General Clive was none the less leaving at once for the

Palatinate and that his report when received would be laid before Parliament. The French authorities hesitated to arrest a British Consul-General. The Clive report, which was admirably lucid and overwhelmingly convincing, was received in London on January 20, 1924. The next day it was read aloud to the House of Commons by Mr. Ronald McNeill, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. It stated that the 'autonomous Government of the Palatinate' would never have existed but for the support of the French army of occupation and that the local inhabitants were opposed to any form of separatism.

To such calm unquestionable evidence there was no reply. M. Poincaré surrendered. The separatist organisations which he had established were at once liquidated. By February the separatist movement had completely collapsed.

This, the most durably important of Curzon's diplomatic achievements, was also the last. 'It is true', wrote Lord D'Abernon, 'that Bonar Law was less acutely hostile to the French programme than Lloyd George had been. But Curzon was still at the Foreign Office and would neither countenance Poincaré's scheme for the Ruhr nor connive in any way with the proposal to create a Rhineland Republic, separate from Prussia. The firmness of his attitude on this question was indeed fatal to the conspiracy of the separatists.'[1] 'Curzon's last action', writes Lord D'Abernon again, 'before leaving office, in making a strong stand regarding the Palatinate and the Rhineland railways has attained full measure of success. He will probably never receive credit for it; people will

[1] Lord D'Abernon, *An Ambassador of Peace*, vol. ii, p. 8.

say that the result was achieved more through the cooing of Ramsay than through the Ciceronian admonitions of his predecessor. This will be unjust. The merit belongs to Curzon, aided, not so much by Ramsay's politeness, as by the impoliteness of the franc in falling from 90 to 105.' [1]

In November 1923 Mr. Baldwin, against Lord Curzon's advice, decided to appeal to the country on the Protection issue. He was badly defeated. On January 23, 1924, he resigned office and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald assumed the position of Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. When, in November of that year, the Conservative Party were again returned to power, Mr. Baldwin entrusted the Foreign Office, not to Lord Curzon, but to Mr. Austen Chamberlain. Curzon, with fine self-sacrifice, accepted the post of Lord President of the Council. Only once, thereafter, did he intervene in foreign affairs.

7

'I have always', he remarked to Lord Riddell, 'taken a humorous view of life.' [2] For a man of such long, such vast, achievement, of so world-wide a reputation, to be confined by Mr. Baldwin to the Privy Council Office was scarcely a humorous episode. Lord Curzon was amused. Having failed, by an inch, to reach the supreme goal of his ambition, his public career ceased to interest him. There were moments when he would complain of the insignificance which had been thrust upon him. These were not his permanent moments. The impression left upon the

[1] Lord D'Abernon, *An Ambassador of Peace*, vol. iii, p. 55.

[2] Lord Riddell's *Intimate Diary*, p. 261.

memory of those who were closest to him during the last year of his life was not the impression of an unhappy or embittered man. It was an impression of genial humour triumphing over personal mortification and physical suffering. It was the impression of a man who knew that his own failure would endure as a fine legend long after the successes of politicians, less significant than he, had been forgotten. It was the impression of a man who, in the charm of his interior life, within the wide circle of his own cultural interests, could find an anodyne, and a field of action, as potent and as remunerative as any offered by the fickle cruelty of public acclaim.

The exuberant energy of his days remained unabated; the far-flung orbit of his enthusiasms was not curtailed. New fields of action and enterprise opened before him. He planned to reside at Oxford for long and frequent periods, administering the University as a Chancellor in more than name. With renewed ardour he applied himself to the completion of his enormous work upon *British Government in India*, and at the same time he embarked upon historical and architectural monographs dealing with the houses which he had owned, inhabited, completed or restored. 'A house', he recorded but a few days before his death, 'has to my mind a history as enthralling as that of an individual. If an old house, it has a much longer existence, and it may be both beautiful and romantic, which an individual seldom is.' On his death six vast kit-bags were discovered packed to overflowing with the material, the notes and many completed chapters of six separate monographs dealing with Kedleston, Hackwood, Montacute, Walmer Castle, Tattershall and Bodiam.

In such impersonal beauty would he find his consolation; upon bricks and mortar, and no longer upon the fleeting gratitude of man, would he set the impress of his energy and service. Kedleston—a renewed and remodelled Kedleston—enhanced by every luxury of modern invention; its galleries enriched by the tapestries, the porcelain and the pictures which in fifty lavish years he had collected; its saloons flashing with the silks and silver of half the world—would remain as the dynastic monument of one who had proved himself the greatest of the Curzons in all those seven hundred years.

To the nation he had given Tattershall; to the nation also he would bequeath his beloved Bodiam. What memorial could any man desire more lovely or more durable?

The memory of those last few months is not, therefore, a distressing memory. It is a memory, not of a self-pitying egoist, but of a genial philosopher; of George Curzon gazing with admiration across the orchids of a dinner table towards the gentle splendour of his wife's beauty; of George Curzon stumping happily among the Siberian iris of the Hackwood water-garden; of his teasing the macaws in the conservatory; of his generous approbation of Ramsay MacDonald's diplomatic successes; of young faces, at a dinner table, laughing at his stories about Gladstone at the Eton Political Society, about Jowett in the Fellows Garden at Balliol, of how Queen Victoria received the news of Omdurman, of the Delhi Durbar and the feel of a gold howdah against his already aching back, of how Lloyd George, in 1918, was the only one of them who refused to be afraid.



LORD CURZON AT HACKWOOD

'I remember', he would begin, 'how once in Pondicherry . . . But I am boring you . . . ?' The younger generation would assert that they were not bored. 'Well', he would continue, beaming with gratitude at this assurance, 'it was in Pondicherry, I was Viceroy at the time. We arrived . . .'

Yet that is not the final impression. Curzon died on March 20, 1925. His coffin, on March 25, was carried into Westminster Abbey. That night it was entrained for Derby. The final impression is of a scarlet coffin studded with golden nails being carried down the steps of the Kedleston frontage towards the village church.

It is an impression of proud intransigence achieving simple form.

Appendix

TERMINAL ESSAY

Some Remarks on the Practice of Diplomacy

THIS study of Lord Curzon represents the third volume of a trilogy on British diplomacy covering the years from 1870 to 1924.

The first volume of that trilogy was a biography entitled *Lord Carnock: a Study in the Old Diplomacy*. The second volume was a critical survey of the Paris Conference called *Peacemaking 1919*. Now that the trilogy has been completed, it may be useful to summarise some of the impressions of British diplomacy which I have derived from an examination extending over several years:

I. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

(1) The study of the science, or art, of diplomacy has suffered from the fact that investigators generally approach the subject from the historical point of view. They are inclined to concentrate upon the documentary rather than upon the human evidence. They have thus tended to interpret motives in the light of ascertainable results, rather than to ascribe those results to the several facets of human fallibility. They have laid too heavy a stress upon the intentional and too light a stress upon the unintentional.

(2) This error has often arisen from the tendency of historians to adopt the *post hoc, propter hoc* method. They observe that a certain solution has proved advantageous to a certain Power or to a certain group of

Powers. They therefore imagine that the statesmen who were responsible for this solution were from the start aware of its advantages and from the start consciously contrived its achievement. In so assuming, they are often attributing to the early period a degree of awareness and intention which did not in fact exist. A subconscious motive of self-advantage may, during those early stages, have been operative. Conscious intention was often absent.

(3) The effect of this erroneous attribution—or more exactly this premature attribution—of motive is to throw upon conscious intention and foresight an emphasis which is exaggerated. There is a tendency to ascribe to individual statesmen and diplomatists a greater degree of volition than they in fact possess. In discussing the policy of a Canning, a Metternich, a Talleyrand, a Cavour or a Bismarck it may be justifiable to adopt such formulas as 'This is what he aimed at: this is what he desired to achieve'. Yet those were exceptional people. Most statesmen and most diplomatists are not in the least exceptional. They may possess certain theories; certain prejudices; certain ideals; and certain desires. The interaction of these elements may, again, create a certain attitude of mind. Yet that attitude is mainly governed by the momentarily expedient—by what, in other words, constitutes the lines of least resistance both at home and abroad. Diplomacy, even in the nineteenth century, was mainly empirical, or, more precisely, it was governed, not by the volition or will-power of individuals, but by a general trend of national opinion.

(4) This trend of public opinion is often emotional and ill-informed. We must realise that the main en-

deavours of modern statesmen must be concerned, not with elaborating some personal policy, so much as with neutralising the ill-effects of popular ignorance, egoism or prejudice. It is for this reason that I deprecate any criticism of diplomacy which concentrates upon the brilliance or stupidity, the foresight or blindness, the knowledge or ignorance, the force or weakness of individual statesmen. I am confident that within the present century democratic diplomacy will create an international state of mind in which public morality will approximate to private morality. Yet before it achieves this identification much muddle-headedness will intervene. This period of uncertain bewilderment will be unduly protracted if we continue to suppose that individual statesmen can or do create a foreign policy parasitic to the main organism of the State.

(5) The present impotence of individual statesmen is not solely due to the rise of democracy, but must also be ascribed to the greater complexity, the increased interdependence, of the factors which they endeavour to mould. Mussolini is no less unfettered than was Cavour, Hitler is even more unhampered than was Bismarck. Yet their capacity for creative action is limited by the fact that no modern problem can possibly be self-contained. Human affairs are no longer manageable by a single individual will, nor can they be comprehended as a whole by any single human intelligence. They have outgrown the capacity of any individual brain. Statesmanship henceforward will have to be a corporate and not a one-man business.

(6) My axioms, therefore, are as follows. (*a*) Diplomatists to-day are subject to public opinion. (*b*) That

opinion is ignorant and inert but in the end will achieve a valuable international state of mind. (*c*) Pending such an achievement, diplomacy must pass through a phase of extreme danger. (*d*) It must therefore concentrate, not upon victories, but upon the avoidance of defeat. (*e*) Until the Sovereign People are sufficiently educated to initiate foreign policy themselves, individual statesmen and diplomatists will be obliged, if only from caution, to eschew all personal, or even dynamic, policies. Their efforts should be concentrated, not upon achieving brilliant solutions, but on avoiding mistakes. (*f*) The main causes of such mistakes are emotionalism, catchwords such as ' national honour ', conceit upon the part of an individual Foreign Secretary, imprecision, lack of realism, optimism and disregard of technical experience or methods.

The suggestions which follow are based upon the belief that it is in fact possible to restrict the areas of human error within manageable proportions.

II. DEFINITION

(*a*) The best definitions of diplomacy have been furnished by Martens, Cussy, and Sir Ernest Satow.

Martens defined it as ' The science of the external relations, or foreign affairs, of States, and, in a more limited sense, the science, or art, of negotiation '.

Cussy defined it as ' The sum of the knowledge and the principles necessary for the good conduct of public affairs between States '.

Satow defined it as ' The application of intelligence and tact to the conduct of official relations between the Governments of independent States '.

(*b*) These definitions, although fully descriptive of

monarchic and oligarchic diplomacy, do not provide democratic diplomacy with that sharp differentiation which it needs between 'foreign policy' and 'the methods by which that policy is executed'.

Such a differentiation is essential if democratic diplomacy is to benefit by, and not merely to break with, the experience of the past. Policy and negotiation should henceforward be regarded as two wholly separate things.

(*c*) This differentiation was blurred, not only in pre-war, but also in post-war, diplomacy.

Before the war, the continental Powers allowed their foreign policy to be framed, as well as conducted, by professional diplomatists.

After the war, Great Britain, and other countries, allowed their foreign policy to be conducted, as well as framed, by professional politicians.

Each of these methods is equally dangerous. Diplomatists should seldom be allowed to frame policy. Politicians should seldom be allowed to conduct negotiation. Policy should be subjected to democratic control: the execution of that policy should be left to trained experts.

(*d*) The necessity of defining what we mean by this term 'diplomacy' is therefore a primary necessity.

If the electorate are ever to rise to the standard of their sovereign responsibility in foreign affairs, they should be taught, before they discuss diplomacy, to ask themselves two questions, namely: 'Are we discussing foreign policy? or are we discussing negotiation?'

(*e*) Much value, in my opinion, will result from this habit of definition.

Once public opinion acquires the practice of differentiating between 'policy' and 'negotiation' it will be less inclined to use the word 'diplomacy' to express both.

Policy should never be, and need never be, secret. No system should ever again be tolerated which can commit men and women, without their knowledge or consent, to obligations which will entail upon them, either a breach of national good-faith, or the sacrifice of their property and lives. It should be established that no international obligation need ever be regarded as valid, unless it has been communicated to, discussed and approved by, the sovereign democracy. In other words, no treaty need ever be operative until it has been ratified by the parliament representing the will of the democracies whose interests are pledged by that treaty.

Once this principle is firmly embedded in the practice and conscience of mankind, there will be less hesitation in entrusting to trained experts the confidential conduct of negotiation. This hesitation derives, almost wholly, from the absence of any axiomatic differentiation between 'foreign policy' and 'the means or methods by which that policy is executed'.

III. BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY

British foreign policy during the nineteenth century was, whatever party held office, governed by six main principles, namely:

(1) Peace.

(2) The Balance of Power on the Continent.

(3) Our maritime supremacy.

(4) Our communications with India and the Empire.
(5) Free Trade.
(6) Humanitarianism.

It might be contended that all but the first of these six principles either have been, or before long will be, abandoned. The League of Nations was devised to supersede the Balance of Power system. Our command of the seas was surrendered at the Washington Conference in 1922. There may, before many decades are past, be no India and no Empire with which to communicate. Free Trade has been rejected in favour of tariff warfare; and our betrayal of the Armenians, the Assyrians and the Greeks has proved that British democracy is only sentimentally, and not actively, affected by humanitarian appeals.

I do not agree with the above contention. I believe that the traditions of British foreign policy are too ingrained and too instinctive to be severed by any shiftings in the incidence of world-authority.

I thus believe that our democracy will retain, in spite of the League of Nations, its instinct for a continental balance of power; that it will, for example, become instinctively 'pro-French' when Germany seems dangerous; and instinctively 'pro-German' when French supremacy upon the continent appears excessive.

I believe that the British people, while perfectly prepared to share maritime supremacy with the United States of America, will never be prepared to share it with any other Power.

I doubt whether, within the next two generations at least, we shall ever become indifferent to our communications with India or the Empire, although I fully expect that the Mediterranean, before long, will

come to be regarded as too exposed a channel of communication, and that Madeira, Freetown, St. Helena, Madagascar and Mauritius will gradually acquire the strategical importance possessed to-day by Gibraltar, Malta, Port Said and Aden.

I am not so pessimistic as to imagine that the tariff warfare in which we are about to be disastrously engaged will be more than a temporary phase in our commercial policy, and I confidently believe that public opinion will sooner or later return, if not to unilateral free trade, then at least to the tradition of economic internationalism.

Nor do I imagine that, when once we have recovered from our curiously prolonged shell-shock, we shall remain any longer indifferent to the appeals of weaker nations or oppressed minorities.

My impression is therefore that it is more probable that British public opinion will return to and retain the traditional principles of British foreign policy than that it will adhere to any new principles. That does not mean that we shall be preoccupied with an identical range of problems. I should imagine, for instance, that African questions and questions of the Pacific will in future occupy the place devoted in the nineteenth century to problems of the Mediterranean and the Near East. But the traditions—(that instinct at one and the same time insular and oceanic)—will remain the same.

IV. DEMOCRATIC CONTROL

I am not arguing that all of the six principles of British policy are very noble principles. Some of them are demonstrably egoistic. I am contending only that

they represent an instinctive tendency on the part of British opinion, in the sense that isolation and the avoidance of all foreign entanglements are instinctive tendencies on the part of American opinion. I do not believe that any foreign policy which does not further these principles will *in the end* receive the approval of the majority of the British people. And I conclude therefore that it will be in accordance with these six principles that our foreign policy must, in the long run, be directed.

On the other hand, there will be periods when public opinion, owing to such temporary causes as severe war-strain, extreme party government or an intensive press propaganda, will run counter to these traditions. There will be moments when we disinterest ourselves in the balance of power, in our communications with India, in the protection of less favoured nations, and in economic internationalism. At such moments the issue may be raised between democratic control of foreign policy and democratic direction of foreign policy. That issue will only be dealt with intelligently if a sufficient number of persons have acquired the habit of observing British foreign policy from a critical and informed point of view. If they abandon themselves to deliberate fictions or to superstitious forms of belief, such as that some qualitative difference exists between the 'old' and the 'new' diplomacy, then indeed they will wander far astray. No such difference, essentially, exists: all that has happened is an adjustment of method corresponding to the changing incidences of sovereignty. Each system was peculiarly exposed to certain types of illness, while being immune to certain other types of illness. It is very neces-

sary, in my judgment, that public opinion should be informed of those types of illness to which democratic foreign policy, and democratic diplomacy, are peculiarly sensitive.

V. DANGERS OF DEMOCRATIC POLICY

The essential defect of democratic policy can be defined in one word, namely '*irresponsibility*'. Under a monarchic or oligarchic system the 'sovereign' who enters into a contract with some foreign State feels himself personally 'responsible' for the execution of that contract. For a monarch or a governing class to repudiate a formal treaty was regarded as a dishonourable thing to do, and would have aroused much criticism both at home and abroad. Now, however, that the people are 'sovereign', this sense of individual or corporate responsibility no longer exists. The people are in no sense aware of their own sovereignty in foreign affairs and have therefore no sense of responsibility in regard to treaties or conventions entered into with other Powers, even when they have themselves, through their elected representatives, approved of those treaties. They are honestly under the impression that their own word has not been pledged and that they are therefore fully entitled to repudiate engagements which they may subsequently feel to be onerous or inconvenient. A state of mind is thus created which (to take an obvious instance) allows a popular newspaper publicly to preach the repudiation of the Locarno Treaties, not on the ground that these treaties were unconstitutionally concluded, but on the ground that their application at the present moment would prove inconvenient and unpopular.

Clearly, if such a state of mind is permitted to continue uncriticised and unchecked, there can be no hope for the future of democratic foreign policy. The foundations of policy, as of diplomacy, are reliability, and under a system of popular repudiation of all national engagements which may eventually prove to be onerous, not even the elements of reliability can exist. Compared with this basic defect in democratic foreign policy, all other dangers are insignificant. Not until the people and the press realise their own sovereignty will they be ready to assume their own responsibility. The period which must inevitably elapse between the fact of popular sovereignty in foreign affairs, and the realisation of that fact by the people themselves; in other words the zone of uncertainty which will have to be traversed before we leave the present quicksands of unconscious public irresponsibility and reach the firm ground of conscious public responsibility, constitute the period or zone of greatest danger. Until that zone has successfully been traversed, no sense of international security can possibly be fostered. The essence of the whole problem is how the danger period is to pass without either disturbance or disintegration. The statesmen of the post-war period have endeavoured to create an artificial sense of security by multiplying security pacts. Yet until the world is convinced that these pacts are regarded by the sovereign democracies as involving their own responsibility they merely serve to inflate the currency of international contract and thereby to diminish certainty rather than to increase confidence.

It will take one, or perhaps two, generations of wise education to create in the several democracies a

responsible state of mind. Once that state of mind has been created, we may indeed hope for peace on earth. For the moment all we can hope to do is to guard against those secondary or subsidiary dangers which will menace democratic foreign policy and democratic diplomacy during the transition period.

I should define these dangers as follows :

(1) *The failure to differentiate* between ' policy ' and ' negotiation ' and the use of the term ' diplomacy ' as applying to both. This danger has already been examined.

(2) *The tendency to identify* with ' the old diplomacy ' the more realistic traditions of British foreign policy and the consequent underestimation, in such matters, of the continuity of public instinct and tradition.

(3) *Subjectivity*, manifesting itself either in dumb inertia or in patriotic excitement. A tendency to excuse these emotional extremes by attributing public lethargy or neurosis to the machinations, ignorance, malignity, class-privilege, or stupidity of those responsible for foreign policy and its execution. In extreme forms this subjectivity leads either to (*a*) jingoism or (*b*) defeatism. Each of these democratic sensations is equally dangerous.

(4) *The time-lag* between informed opinion and popular feeling. This requires to be dealt with in greater detail.

Although the essential instincts of our democracy in regard to foreign affairs are continuous, stable and shared by a large majority, yet their momentary feelings on the subject are intermittent, variable and diverse. It is possible, I feel, to estimate with approximate certainty what policy the majority of the

electorate will in the end desire; yet it is often impossible to elicit this majority approval at the moment when it is most needed.

An unfortunate factor in all representative systems is that the temporary emotions of certain sections of the electorate or the Press are apt to manifest themselves in the shape of 'opinions' on the part of certain sections of the House of Commons. These 'opinions' obstruct and impede national policy at times when that policy ought to be formulated in the most categorical and immediate form.

Sir Edward Grey, for instance, ought to have been able in July 1914 to state the 'Peace' and 'Balance of Power' doctrines in such drastic terms as would have discouraged Russia from mobilisation and Germany from attacking France or Belgium.

In 1919, again, Mr. Lloyd George should have been able to expound the same doctrines in such a manner as to make it clear to France that Great Britain would not permit her to reduce Germany to ruin.

In both these cases, public opinion would in the end have approved such categorical statements; at the moment, however, public opinion would not have been prepared to accord approval. On each occasion, and with disastrous consequences, the opportunity was missed.

(5) *Imprecision.* The essence of a good foreign policy is certitude. An uncertain policy is always bad.

On the other hand, parliamentary and press opposition is less likely to concentrate against an elastic foreign policy than against one which is precise. It is thus a grave temptation for a Foreign Minister under

the democratic system to prefer an idealistic formula, which raises only intellectual criticism, to a concrete formula which is open to popular attack. This temptation is one which should be resisted. Not merely does it promote in Foreign Secretaries a habit of complacent, unctuous and empty rectitude, but it diminishes the credit of international contract.

The Kellogg Pact, for instance, either meant a new heaven and a new earth, or it meant very little. Few people, apart from Mr. Kellogg himself, regarded it as a new revelation; its main effect was to discredit previous instruments, such as the Covenant, which had also endeavoured, though with greater precision, to provide for the pacific settlement of international disputes.

(6) *Hypocrisy.* Democratic foreign policy indulges in the (at present) sentimental fiction that relations between states can be conducted upon the same moral basis as those between individuals. As an ideal, this is a theory which I thoroughly endorse. Yet as a description of existing relations I can regard it only as a false description. Relations between individuals are ultimately governed by law. Relations between States are not governed by law. There can be no real analogy between the ethical values of an organised, and those of an anarchical, society.

Democratic diplomacy endeavours to conceal this awkward fact, and to hide the realities of force under the appearance of consent. For the downright lies of the fifteenth century system it has substituted a technique of self-righteous half-truths. It thus destroys confidence, and confidence, after certitude, is the most important element of good foreign policy.

(7) *Unreality.* Democratic foreign policy—proceeding again from a fallacious identification between states and individuals—pays lip-service to the doctrine of equality among nations.

This exposes it to that miasma of unreality which clouds all its actions. Nicaragua is not the equal of the United States, nor is San Domingo the equal of France. To advance the theory of such equality is to advance something which is senseless and unreal.

By this also are certitude and confidence diminished.

It is not, however, general certainty only which is embarrassed by this egalitarian fallacy, it is also the constructive authority of the British Empire which is damaged by this wholly unproductive fiction. Our physical power may be an unknown quantity: it may, at any given crisis, be either tiny or immense: our moral influence, on the other hand, should become a known and continuous factor in international affairs. In all essential issues, the British Dominions and even the United States *think* the same; although they *feel* in shapes of disconcerting difference. Our potential influence is immeasurable; our actual influence is intermittent; the proportions of power represented by the English-speaking world are overwhelming; the identity of theory shared in that world is, to all who have become accustomed to European psychology, very striking. I should like to see British democracy think more of democracy and less of policy. It is in our democratic consanguinity with our Dominions, as also with the United States, and not in any sentimental belief in egalitarianism, that we shall find our authority. I believe in authority, even as I believe in power. And I should wish to see democratic authority exercised

with moderation, and without either arrogance or fear. It is the timidity of democratic policy which verges so frequently upon the selfish and the inert.

VI. DANGERS OF DEMOCRATIC DIPLOMACY

In spite of the dangers noted above, democratic foreign policy is unquestionably less dangerous than any other form of foreign policy. Democratic diplomacy, on the other hand, is, owing to its disturbing inefficiency, very dangerous indeed.

By 'democratic diplomacy' I mean the execution of foreign policy, either by politicians themselves, or through the medium of untrained negotiators whom they have selected from among their own supporters or personal friends.

The failure to differentiate between 'policy' and 'negotiation' has led to the fallacy that all important negotiation should be carried out, not by persons possessing experience and detachment, but by persons possessing a mandate from the people. In its extreme form this fallacy has led to 'Diplomacy by Conference' —perhaps the most unfortunate diplomatic method ever conceived.

(1) *Diplomacy by Conference.* Obviously there are occasions when international agreement can only be achieved by oral discussion between plenipotentiaries. There are occasions, also, when the issues are so vital and immediate that 'policy' as well as 'negotiation' is involved. On such occasions the negotiators must be identical with the framers of policy, and the resultant congresses and conferences must be attended by the Prime Ministers or Foreign Secretaries of the several Powers.

It should be established, however, that such occasions are exceptional and dangerous. Such conferences should be entered into only after careful preparation, on the basis of a programme elaborated and accepted in advance, against a background of acute public criticism and with full realisation that many months of discussion will be required. The subjects for debate should moreover be rigidly curtailed to those requiring a decision of policy, and all secondary issues, entailing negotiation only, should be left in expert hands.

In the four years immediately following the war these principles were discarded. Innumerable conferences were held without adequate preparation, with no precise programme and within a time limit of three or four days. The subjects discussed were diverse, intricate and suitable only for expert negotiation. The meetings took place in an atmosphere of extreme publicity and uncritical popular expectation. The resultant conclusions, inevitably, were inconclusive, intangible, specious, superficial, and unreal. Compare the expert handling of such conferences as those of Washington, Lausanne and Brussels with the hurried histrionics of Genoa or Cannes.

'Diplomacy by Conference' is to-day so discredited that it may be thought that there is no danger of its revival as a method of international negotiation. The frame of mind which allowed of that method is still, however, a very general frame of mind. It is caused by uncertainty regarding the frontier between democratic control of policy and expert conduct of negotiation. That frontier can only be properly delimitated if we have a clear conception of the dangers of amateurishness on the one hand, and of professionalism on the other.

(2) *The politician as negotiator.* It has already been stated that on exceptional occasions, or in dealing with vital issues of policy, the politician must himself negotiate. I should wish, however, to summarise some of the dangers to which, on such occasions, he is exposed.

(*a*) *Public opinion.* A politician suffers from the essential disadvantage of being a politician. In other words his position and his future career are dependent upon popular approval. He is acutely sensitive to transitory 'opinions' in the House of Commons, his party, or the press. He is apt to reject what he knows to be reasonable because he also knows that it will be difficult to explain; conversely, he is tempted (as Orlando was tempted in the Fiume controversy) to fabricate by propaganda an artificial popular approval in order to strengthen his diplomatic position.

The professional, on the other hand, places ultimate national interest above immediate popular applause.

(*b*) *Ignorance.* By this I do not mean an ignorance of foreign facts, but an ignorance of foreign psychology. It mattered nothing at all that Mr. Lloyd George should never have heard of Teschen; it mattered very much indeed that he should treat the French or the Germans as he would treat an English trades-union delegation. Those schoolboy levities which might put a Lancashire Labour leader at his ease were regarded by M. Briand as disconcerting; those rhetorical questions, those revivalist dithyrambs which, to the Mayor of Llanberis would appear as usual forms of human speech, were interpreted by Dr. Rathenau or M. Gounaris as signifying either invective or encouragement. Frequent and serious were the misunderstandings which therefrom resulted.

(*c*) *Vanity*. A British politician, unaccustomed to negotiation with foreign statesmen, is prone to disturbances of vanity. The fact that his general culture, as his knowledge of foreign languages, is generally below the level of that possessed by those with whom he is negotiating gives him a sense of inferiority to which he reacts in unfortunate ways. Either he will air his schoolboy French to the distress of his audience and the confusion of business, or else he will be truculently insular. Upon weaker minds the mere fact of being, although abroad, a centre of public interest, the lavish hospitality of foreign Governments, the actual salutes of people dressed in foreign uniforms, have a most disintegrating effect. Affability, gratitude and general silliness result.

Such subjective forms of vanity are perhaps less dangerous than its more objective manifestations. A Prime Minister, for instance, who is conscious of a firm majority at home, is apt to acquire an autocratic habit of mind. Not only is he irritated by the fact that he cannot compel foreign statesmen to obey his behests, but he resents, and thus endeavours to ignore, those circumstances which he is unable to influence as well as those areas of knowledge which he can never hope to possess. A tendency develops in him to deny the existence of those circumstances and that knowledge and to soar above them on the light wings of obscurantism and improvisation. Sir Charles Mallet in his *Lloyd George : a Study* (page 156) has well described the effect of this particular manifestation of human vanity. ' Unvarying self-assurance ', he writes,' tempered by an ever-varying opportunism is perhaps the most dangerous equipment that statesmanship can have.'

Democratic diplomacy is very apt to acquire this equipment.

(*d*) *Controversy.* A mind trained in parliamentary or forensic debate is apt to assume that a conference is a form of controversy. Such people start from the assumption that the interests of foreign countries are necessarily opposed. They tend to envisage negotiation in the form of a debate rather than in the form of a consultation. They thus endeavour to 'score points'. At many a Conference I have seen a whole hour wasted in purely artificial dialectics. The politician is always conscious of an audience; the trained negotiator is conscious only of the negotiation in hand. The reason why lawyers have always made the worst diplomatists is that their argumentative faculties are too much on the alert. Negotiation should never degenerate into an argument; it should be kept always on the level of a discussion.

(*e*) *Overwork.* The politician, again, is always pressed for time. It thus results that negotiation is seldom pursued to a precise conclusion, but is suspended halfway upon the first landing offered for compromise. This time-pressure, again, leads to impatience. The politician as negotiator is unwilling to listen to information which may tempt him to alter his own opinion and thus necessitate further discussion. Similarly he is prone to reject all suggestions, however admirable, which might entail further study or delay. Time-pressure, in every case, is accompanied by overwork: the results are expedients, half-solutions, evasion of essentials, improvisations, and imprecision.

Such are the major disabilities from which even the

noblest politician, when he becomes a diplomatist, is apt to suffer.

VII. DANGERS OF PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMACY

The virtues of professional diplomacy are implicit in the above catalogue of the vices of its opposite. The professional diplomatist is indifferent to public applause, has devoted some thirty years to the study of foreign psychology, is unaffected by vanity, dislikes controversy, eschews all forms of publicity, and is not subject to acute time-pressure or overwork. In addition, as a trained expert in a common science working with other experts, he is intent upon producing a piece of work which will satisfy his own professional standards. All that he cares for is the approbation of those whose judgment is worth having. He is completely indifferent to the opinion of those whose judgment is not worth having. This specialised vanity impels him to prefer competent to incompetent work, real achievement to achievements which have only the appearance of reality.

Yet he, also, has his dangers.

(*a*) *Professionalism.* A man who has spent some thirty years in the diplomatic service acquires, inevitably, an international frame of mind. More specifically he comes to have a masonic feeling for other diplomatists. On occasions he may lack a proper degree of reverence for politicians, or even Press magnates, and an unwarranted contempt for, and suspicion of, their ways and means. In extreme cases he may feel, even, that public and parliamentary opinion is foolish and ill-informed.

Upon himself the effect of these prejudices is seldom

serious. Being a civil servant he has been trained to loyalty and obedience, nor would he (I am discussing only British diplomatists) dream of acting contrary to the wishes of the Government in power, and therefore of his democratic sovereign. His prejudices are of negative rather than of positive disadvantage. His experience of democracy in so many lands and in such different forms may induce in him a mood of scepticism. This absence of belief will be interpreted by those politicians with whom he comes into contact as an attitude of superiority. Suspicion and misprisal will result.

(*b*) *Lethargy*. The professional diplomatist is apt to lack initiative. Important problems, in his opinion, settle themselves; unimportant problems are unimportant. He has seen so much damage done by well-meaning officiousness; he has seen so little damage done by letting well alone. His whole training has tended to convince him that good diplomacy is a slow and cautious business, and he looks with exaggerated suspicion upon all dynamic innovations. For him reality is relative and never absolute: he believes in gradations, in grey zones; he is always impatient of those who think enthusiastically in terms of black or white. Lethargy of judgment descends upon him, a slightly contemptuous disbelief in all forms of human certainty. He is thus more prone to analysis than to synthesis, more ready to indicate doubts than to produce dynamic assurances, more inclined to deny than to affirm. This propensity proves very irritating to the politician anxious to score a rapid popular success.

(*c*) *Narrowness*. The professional diplomatist suffers also from certain limitations of outlook. He ob-

serves widely, but he does not observe deeply. He is inclined to attach to superficial events greater importance than he attaches to underlying causes. He is more interested in overt political symptoms than in obscure social or economic diseases. He is well aware that his judgment, if it is to be of any real value to his Government, must be 'sound': he tends therefore to allow the more imaginative and original sections of his brain to atrophy. True it is that a brilliant diplomatist is a grave public menace; the consciousness of this fact is apt to induce our professional diplomatists to attach exclusive importance to not being brilliant. This, certainly, is a fault on the right side. Our diplomatic service is without question (and no foreigner would deny it) the best in the world. Yet upon the casual observer it may produce a false impression of conservatism and mental rigidity.

(*d*) *Timidity.* This quality should, perhaps, have been cited in the category of virtues and not in the category of defects. The British diplomatist is in fact as frightened of 'causing trouble' as the British naval officer is frightened of sinking his ship. Inevitably, the Foreign Office prefer diplomatists who say soothing and optimistic things to diplomatists who tell home truths in defiant language. Smugness, rather than outspoken realism, is apt to colour many diplomatic reports. A certain narcotic quality thus pervades the information which they supply.

Yet this is but a venial sin.

VIII. A SUGGESTED SOLUTION

It should not be beyond the ingenuity of man to devise some system whereby democratic diplomacy

could benefit by the virtues, and neutralise the vices, of the material at its disposal.

The following principles are tentatively advanced.

(1) *Definition.* The distinction between foreign policy and diplomacy proper should become a national habit of thought. Policy should be directly under democratic control; diplomacy, which would when possible be left to the expert, should be only indirectly under democratic control.

(2) *Education.* The people should be made conscious of their sovereignty in foreign affairs and should be educated to take a responsible view of that sovereignty. They should be encouraged to exercise their control over foreign policy in an active and continuous, not merely in a passive and intermittent manner. Above all they should be taught to adopt towards foreign affairs a more critical and less sensational attitude. In particular they should be warned against the following:

(*a*) *Propaganda.* Foreign propaganda is generally so clumsy that it may be disregarded. It should be noted, however, that we may within a few years be exposed to intensive foreign propaganda by wireless. I think this danger is apt to be exaggerated since, once it becomes serious, it will certainly be controlled and regulated by international agreement.

More dangerous is sectional propaganda carried out in our national newspapers and appealing to the emotions and fears of the electorate rather than to their judgment. This danger can best be met by 'reasoned statements', either made over the wireless or in carefully prepared memoranda issued for publication in the Press. By 'memoranda' I have in mind, not the

official communiqué which conceals more than it discloses, but an expert and unbiassed statement of the issues involved. A perfect instance of this sort of statement is furnished by the American and British Notes on the debt question, the publication of which had an educative and calming effect in both countries. I should like to see this system much extended.

(*b*) *The controversial point of view.* A great advance would be made if the public could be educated to regard foreign affairs, not as a football match in which one is expected to take sides, but as a scientific discussion in which one is expected to weigh evidence. Catchwords such as 'diplomatic triumphs' or 'diplomatic defeats' should be discouraged, and the common-sense or business-like approach should be fostered. 'National honour', again, is an expression which a democracy should be educated to regard with the deepest suspicion. It is almost always a synonym for 'national conceit'.

I am of those who believe that British democracy is immensely educable in these directions. One has only to compare the effect, upon the ordinary man, of intelligent exposition such as that of Mr. Vernon Bartlett with the impression created by one-sided sensationalism such as is provided in the popular newspapers, to realise that public opinion has a very shrewd idea when it is being told sense about foreign affairs and when it is being told nonsense.

(*c*) *Imprecision and unreality.* I should wish our democracy to acquire the constant habit of asking themselves, 'Is this precise? Does it mean anything? Does it bear any relation to actual reality?'

It is on these lines that I should hope to see the

public educated in order that it can exercise its powers with due responsibility.

(3) *Extension of Foreign Service.* Concurrently with this education of public opinion I should wish to see the Foreign Service extended and adjusted in such a manner as to command more authority and to embrace an even wider range of intelligence and experience.

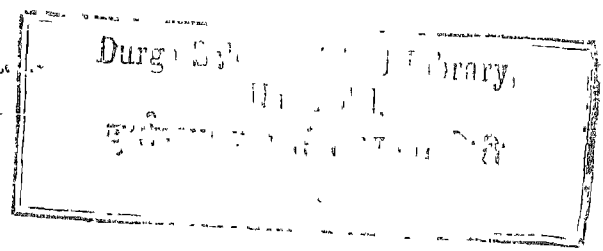
(*a*) I should like, for instance, to see the Diplomatic Service and the Foreign Office fused with the Consular Service and the Directorate of Overseas Trade. All social qualifications should be abolished.

(*b*) I should like to see a Staff College created analogous to that which exists in the army. Only men who had passed through this Staff College would, as a general principle, be eligible for the higher posts.

(*c*) This Staff College would also be open to members of the Treasury and Board of Trade and would concentrate almost wholly upon economics, commerce and finance. The course would be taken from eight to ten years after entry into the service and would be as exacting as can be devised. The successful candidates would constitute a body of highly-trained politico-economic experts (analogous to the Inspecteurs des Finances in France) who could thereafter be exchanged between the Treasury, the Board of Trade, and the Foreign Office, or sent out as Commercial and Diplomatic secretaries to our Embassies abroad. I admit that such a body, if created, would attract and absorb not only the cream of the Civil Service but the best abilities in the country. I admit also that the existence of such a cohort of highbrows might alarm the more sensitive democrat. Yet if the control of policy is firmly vested in the House of Commons (and for that

purpose only I am in favour of the constitution of a non-party Committee on Foreign Affairs) there should be no danger in entrusting the execution of that policy to the most expert and intelligent officials that can be obtained. The material is already there in abundance. All that is needed is to give to that material the opportunity and the specialised training which it needs.

they



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